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COLOUR ORIENTATION
WEBSTER REPRODUCTIONS
325 WELLS RD, BRISTOL BS4 5DL

PRINTING
REDWOOD WEB OFFSET
VEDMANS WAY
THROWBRIDGE - WILTS

DISTRIBUTION
BENTON & BOWLES
304 BRINGTON ROAD
LONDON - SW5 7AG

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8000 Plus is an independent publication. The
company who produce it - Future Publishing Ltd -
have no link with Unisys plc.
We welcome contributions from readers - please
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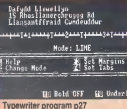
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'STOP PRESS' is the ideal DeskTop Publishing program for home enthusiasts, schools, societies and small businesses. 'STOP PRESS' makes it simple to create professional newsletters, leaflets, forms and flyers, in fact anything where text and graphics are required – placing you right at the heart of the DeskTop Publishing Revolution.

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WHO'S BEHIND?

Cast your mind back to 1957. A young Alan Sugar is on some sort of parade, marching in an East End street as his parents watch proudly. 'Look,' says his mum, 'everyone's out of step except our Alan'.

The funny thing is, if his mum said that about him today, she'd be right. 'Proper' computer manufacturers are rushing headlong into newer and bigger products all the time, while Sugar's Amstrad plc stack up massive profits (£5 per second, it is calculated) by selling yesterday's product. Why?

Computers up till very recently have been a hobbyist's item, restricted to a band of people with their own jargon who were more interested in writing a program to enable their kit computer A to read a file from kit computer B than they were with actually printing out the contents of the file. Which was probably just as well. Just like the motor car in its early days, computers were a minority thing which needed huge investments of money and maintenance time.

Sugar's philosophy – as with his audio products – was simple: get cheap old gear, package it up for Joe and Jane punter to make things easy for them, and never settle for less than huge profit margins. Take the technology to the market instead of waiting for the market to come to the technology.

The thing is, most of the industry don't seem to have cottoned on to this fact. Not everyone who could benefit from owning a computer either at work or at home wants to spend hours and hours of time learning all about their operating systems, reading the magazines to

find the best printer/keyboard/software/monitor to go with their computer (which came without all of those), and generally working for nothing. Normal people's priorities about computer systems do not include what megahertz the thing runs, what chip it runs on, or even who made it. After all, do you spend hours agonising over the make of carburettor you want in your next car, or who made the shock absorbers, or how many seconds it takes to accelerate between fifty and seventy?

No, you buy a car because it's affordable, reliable, comfortable and easy to run (hence the death of awkward non-standards such as petrol injection, the sloth of the Diesel market, the disappearance of the Wankel engine etc. – if only there were a remotely similar set of standards in computing as in the car market!) But how many computers can be described as any of those, particularly comfortable and easy to run?

As the big boys carry on trying to develop the biggest machines first, the boys and girls from Amstrad continue to mop up the 'lower end' of the market – which is about 95% of it. Maybe it's everyone else who is out of step?

Rob Ainsley

Apply within

8000 Plus is looking for an editor for the magazine here in the centre of Bath.

We're looking for someone who has plenty of experience in the magazine world and, most important, can identify and satisfy the requirements of readers. An aptitude for desktop publishing clearly helps too. As well as this you'll have a PCW, a sense of humour, and the ability to fool all of the people all of the time.

Send a covering letter and a cv to: Kevin Cox, Future Publishing, 4 Queen St, Bath BA1 1EJ and mark the envelope

'Editorial Vacancy' or something in the top corner.

(Sorry, scandalmongers, the current incumbent is not being sacked for gross misconduct, nor has he renounced the publishing world to go on a commune in India. Rob Ainsley is moving on to edit Future's newest publication, the weekly news magazine *New Computer Express*, 48p from newsagents everywhere. There's a PCW column in there, so you can keep up not only with the general computing scene but also with the very latest PCW news.)

Local hero

A vote of thanks to the Geoffrey Baynes, landlord of the Queen Victoria, Priddy, Somerset (who just happens to be our cover photographer Stuart Baynes' father). He lent us the lounge of his pub for an afternoon while our art team set up and shot last month's cover.

The fact that the session took place in a public house,

and the fact that the transparencies taken became progressively blurred as the session went on are, we are sure, quite unrelated.



Open and shut case

Last month we published a letter from a Mr Armstrong lamenting the discontinuation of those clear plastic disc cases that have been superseded by plastic wallets. Those boxes aren't necessary, we said. Rubbish, quite a few of you have retorted, give us cases: you never know when some unhinged person will run amok in your disc box with a pump-action X-ray machine and wipe

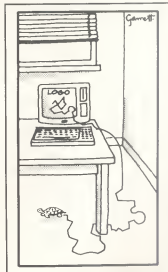
the address marks off.

So, here's a few addresses to chase up. It appears that you can order disc cases in any quantities from Redcar Computing of 8 Dundas St, Redcar, Cleveland (tel. 0642 486643) for 39p each, p&p free.

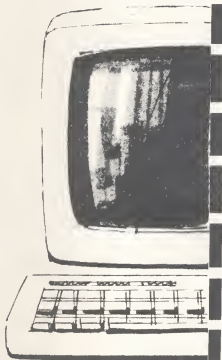
Kador (0443 740281) also do disc cases and ComSoft (0890 2854) will sell you 10 for £3.50 (p&p free for any orders over £10).

Logo motion

Since we reviewed CP Edwards' Logo Manual last month, this tutorial-cum-manual on disc has been expanded and the phone number has changed. It's now £15 for a two-disc set and the contact number is 0225 837087.



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A Message from Amstrad's Chairman

Dear Amstrad Computer User,

You don't need me to remind you that you have selected the best computer in its price range. Numerous journalists from the specialist press have now contributed to the opinion that Amstrad computers represent the best all-round machine you can buy.

One of the many reasons why computer journalists have received our products so enthusiastically is undoubtedly our careful attention to providing information on the system and its software.

You can be a part of Amstrad's ongoing effort to inform and help users by taking advantage of this opportunity

to join the User Club. Catering only for the Amstrad computer user, this specialist support club was initially formed by Amstrad solely for the purpose of assisting you with all your computer needs.

There are many immediate and direct benefits available, so don't delay before filling out the application form below and sending it back to Amstrad.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Sugar
Alan Sugar
Chairman AMSTRAD Plc



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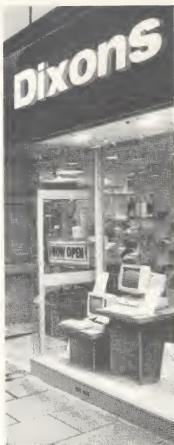
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Note the PCW 8256. Proof of their commitment to the top name and the best game in office electronics

The business business

Dixons, so long dismissed by computer retailers as nothing more than box shifters (that means they must be selling a lot more than respectable computer dealers), are throwing down the gauntlet to the competition. Following successful trials in London and Liverpool they are opening the first in a chain of Dixons Business Centres in Leicester.

Steve Gibbons, the new store manager, said 'Our fully trained staff can offer professional advice on the right equipment to suit each customer's needs and we will be delighted to visit their premises to discuss and assess their requirements and even install equipment on a trial basis to ensure that it is right.'

The Business Centres will offer the full range of office electronic equipment from calculators to computers, phones to fax. Although much of their normal range will be duplicated Dixons plan to compete on service with traditional office equipment retailers. There will be hotline support and a resident engineer for technical backup on a full range of top name branded goods.

Finally they will offer a variety of finance deals aimed at making it easier for the smaller business to move confidently into office automation. ■

News from the gnome service

Fresh from saving most of the unknown world in Gnome Ranger Ingrid Bottomlow has an even more difficult task on her hands; can she defeat the powers of greed?

To find out you'll need to buy Level 9's latest game, Ingrid's Back. This three part adventure features thirty pictures, plus recall and editing of previous commands. Versions of Ingrid's Back for other machines have already received good reviews.

Ingrid's Back is available from Level 9 Computing at £19.95; for more details tel 0344 487597. ■



'Hi doll', I said. She broke my arm. Straight away I knew there was something different about this gal.

German interfaces: Amstrad relent

Recent buyers of 8256s and 8512s have been dismayed to find that the interface at the back where their mouse or RS 232 should go is the wrong shape. Amstrad have been shipping in German models and these have the standard German expansion port instead of the card-like British connector.

Amstrad now say that an adaptor to convert the connector to the British standard is available. The adaptors are free of charge from the dealers who supplied you with your PCW so long as the PCW in question is still under warranty and will be available soon, they told us. So it looks like a happy ending after all. ■

NEWS

À la modem

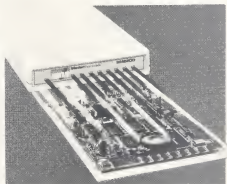
Amstrad have previously released an internal modem for their PC range of machines but now comes news of an external modem for everyone else who wants to join the world of data communications.

The Amstrad modem is called the SM2400 in line with their usual policy of names that almost make sense (Sugar's modem 2400 baud?). The modem comes in a sleek flat box in the ubiquitous shade of computer cream (BS 9876/AB-12 perhaps) with a separate power supply and enough lead to leave it on the floor. There is an RS232 ribbon cable supplied and all the usual indicator lights are on the front. It also boasts an internal speaker for call monitoring and a through connector for a phone.

For the technically minded the

SM2400 supports V21, V23, V22 and V22bis (which will not be explained here), call progress monitoring, auto answer, pulse or tone dialling, auto baud rate selection and full Hayes compatibility all of which is detailed in the comprehensive manual.

The SM2400 is being sold at £249 + VAT which is probably the lowest price of any external 22bis Hayes compatible modem outside the USA.



Another Amstrad all-in-one package. All the speeds, all the parts and all the features at half the price of the competition

Picture this

The problem with clip art is that you never seem to have the picture you need on disc. This is especially so for anyone with unusual pictorial requirements and no time or artistic talent.

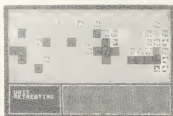


Tecnation have now added to the growing quantity of clip art libraries with Get Set Typeset for the Stop Press DTP package. Produced in association with the original designer of Stop Press the package consists of three discs containing new fonts, clip art and utilities as well as a comprehensive manual.

The price from Tecnation, 23 The Nursery, High Street, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4UA is £24.99 inclusive of postage and VAT. ■

Don't hold the front page

A recent press release concerning Ancient Battles, a graphic strategy program to recreate many of the pitched battles from the world of antiquity, failed to include the PCW in the list of machines for which it is



Coming soon to a screen near you?

being made available. According to CCS this is because they don't have a programmer who can convert it from the CPC or Spectrum to the PCW.

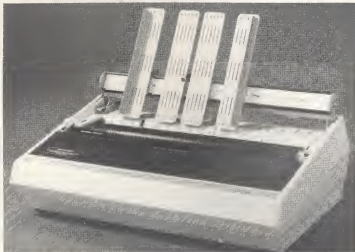
If strategy game conversions are your forte then contact Tricia Peters on 01 985 7232. ■

Marginally better

The seemingly endless frustration of trying to get cut sheet paper properly aligned in the printer, essential for anyone using headed paper, has prompted a variety of solutions, some better than others. Maxafit, launched at the PC show, is the brainchild of Margin Maker who produced the product of the same name for the PCW 8256 printer.

Maxafit is designed to be nearly universal in that it will attach to both wide and narrow printers, dot matrix or daisywheel, Amstrad or not just so long as they have a similar paper path to an electric typewriter (top feed basically).

The product is intended to sell



Cut out all those problems with cut sheets. Maxafit aims to provide the ultimate solution to the problem of using cut sheet paper

retail eventually but is currently mail order only. It has already been taken up by a mail order catalogue (full page, big secret, until the launch) as well as being available directly from Margin Maker, PO Box 121, Gresham Road, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 2AJ at a price of £25.75 including VAT and postage.

Refresh your ribbons

If you do a lot of printing then the cost of replacing ribbons begins to become an important consideration. There have been many suggestions for increasing the life of ribbons mainly centered on the liberal application of WD-40.

Now comes something a bit more professional looking for your shelf. Caspell Computer Services have produced a product called Refresh which is 'a complex mixture of inks, oils and organo-silicon compounds which actually restores to immediate good health any ailing and faded fabric printer ribbon for only a few pence each'.

Refresh should eventually be in the shops but is currently available mail order from Caspell Computer Services, 43 Emerson Road, Poole, Dorset for £8.95. ■

Code comfort

Spa Associates are publishing a new book on Z80 machine code programming for the PCW machines. It will be imaginatively titled 'Z80 Machine Code' and is available by mail order from SPA at £15 including postage. For more information phone 0937 843855. ■

For starters

When you buy a new printer from a dealer they don't always include the bits and pieces you actually

need to make the thing work. Many a buyer has arrived home with a new printer to find they can't actually use it.

To get you going Compumart are offering a free starter pack with every new printer you buy. Choose from among Amstrad, Citizen and Panasonic printers in 80 or 132 column and with speeds up to 288 cps (characters per second) in draft, 96 cps in NLQ.

The starter packs include 1000 sheets of listing paper, an extra printer ribbon and an interface cable. If you can't resist their offer contact Compumart on their order hotline 0509 610444 and they say you can have your printer on the next working day. ■

Ath good ath a mile

Official Secrets is the name of a new club inaugurated under the Magnetic Scrolls umbrella (it's their club). Those who follow in the footsteps of the Pilgrim will want to wander along. On joining you get a mini-adventure (their own description) called Myth, automatic membership of Special Reserve which entitles you to various goodies at discounts, 6 issues of Confidential — the club magazine (the review copy is excellent), a copy of Gnome Ranger or a surprise goody if you already have it, a telephone help desk for those times when you finally admit to being utterly stymied and lastly, a chance to win £500 worth of computer hardware by sending in tips and hints.

All this for only £19.95, what more could you want? Contact John Trevillian on 0279 726541. ■



Myth, real enough but for Official Secrets members only

Teach an old dog new tricks

Scarabeus Software have released version 2.0 of Textatrix, the text analysis program. As well as character, word and sentence counts, average word length and average sentence length Textatrix

now includes a Fog Index (which gives an indication of the reader age of the text) and a long word count.

For further information on Textatrix contact Scarabeus software on 01 515 4313. ■

Pass the port

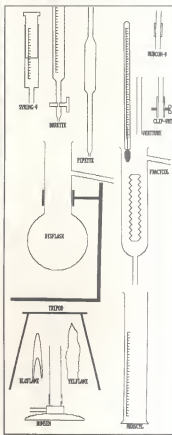
CP Software have updated a number of their products for release. As well as an updated Graphics, the Universe and Everything (reviewed in this issue) Lightning BASIC now includes a command to reconfigure the output ports on a PCW 9512 for those using two printers. Details of CP Software products on 0993 823643

Good retort

Chemists who can't draw are catered for by Slick Fit, a collection of Stop Press clip art to suit secondary school science teachers containing images of most of the apparatus used in the chemical laboratory in a form that be easily fitted together on screen. There are a number of sprites, such as arrows, and a font designed for writing chemical equations.

The price is £12.50 and it is available from G Ponting, Weavers Place, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO5 1TU. ■

Don't bandy with banda copies again



cp software

CLOCK CHESS 89

CLOCK CHESS 89 is the **strongest and most versatile** chess program yet for your PCW computer. It has the most advanced 3D graphics, the widest range of options, the power to play incredibly fast and the intelligence to selectively search deep into the position. CLOCK CHESS 89 has been tested against a wide range of other chess programs and has shown itself to be stronger than any of them.

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ALL SHAPES

PCs and 5¼" discs, PPCs and 3½" discs, PCWs and 3" discs... how can you get the best out of them all? Add a disc drive to your PCW! Steve Patient shows you how

Which discs?

Now that you have your 5¼" drive connected and working what do you do? First, buy some 5¼" discs. You should get the kind labelled 96 tpi D/D D/S. This means 96 tracks per inch, double sided, double density. They will be a bit more expensive than those labelled 48 tpi but buy them anyway. Prices vary dramatically from as low as 50p each up to about £2.50p each. Branded discs at around £1 each are a safe buy. Format them with DISCKIT as B: discs and use them as you would a 3" B drive disc - only these are cheaper.

How compatible?

At the moment you're restricted to the type of stuff you can use on both PCW and PC/PPC etc. Really you can only use simple text (ASCII) files on both machines, or data files for the small number of programs available for PCW and PC (Masterfile, SuperCalc 2, WordStar, Protext). Programs themselves certainly won't work.

Rumours are growing that a PC LocoScript is under preparation - but please don't ring us or Locomotive asking about it till it and when it should come out, portable LocoScripting - with a PPC, perhaps, and your 3½" drive - would be practical.

As part of an ongoing project for the Ornithological Society concerning the effects of coastal pollution on waders you find yourself drawn into keeping detailed records of birds found in estuaries all over the country. A worthy project but you realise it's going to prove time consuming; however, having a computer and a database you feel justified in insisting that the mass of information arriving at your home must be on disc. At least now you won't have to waste time typing it all into your PCW.

When the data begins to arrive, you discover too late that you should have specified 3" discs. Not only do you get 5¼" discs but also the 3½" kind. And they come from a variety of machines. You regard the steadily rising tide of incompatible discs with a sense of mounting panic, but don't worry. Help is at hand.

MS-DOS kills bugs... dead

The most common requirement for PCW owners is certainly the transfer of text from the IBM compatible machines to the PCW and vice versa. Until recently this meant 5¼" discs with 40 tracks to each side. The way MS-DOS handles its directory is totally different from CP/M's, so it isn't enough just to fix a 5¼" drive to the PCW. CP/M itself can never read an MS-DOS disc unaided. It will

simply give you a message saying Bad Format - Retry, Ignore or Cancel? When you cancel it will follow up with an explanation:

CP/M error in B: Invalid Format
BDOS Function = 17 File ???????????

Although not everyone would agree that this explains very much.

If you still plan to read MS-DOS discs then the first step has to be attaching the new disc drive. There's no soldering or wiring involved: you just plug it in. If you have an 8256 or a 9512 then everything you need is already present inside the machine. If you have an 8512 then it means giving up your existing second drive. There are several ways to go about tackling the problem including some off-the-shelf answers.

One of the first solutions to come to market was the Intermem Interface marketed by Gemini. This was a combined hardware and software fix. The interface itself consisted of a small printed circuit board mounted on a black plate which screwed into the gap provided for the second disc drive on an 8256 machine. On the front of this plate were two standard sockets for BBC computers - one for the disc drive and one for the power supply to the disc drive (as you might have guessed Gemini were involved in the BBC market already).



PCW AND SIZES

One of the nicer things about the PCW range of machines is the 3" discs; convenient to put in your pocket and nearly indestructible. Unfortunately the rest of the world goes its own strange way. But you can persuade the PCW to speak with other, less favoured, computers – and adding a disc drive can be an easy way to do it.

Disc kit

Once the Intergraph had been fitted the second drive, which could be any BBC compatible unit, acted just like the official Amstrad drive. Of course, if it wasn't an 80 track double sided drive then you couldn't format or read it without extra software. Gemini supplied software to read and write most drives and formats but not to format the discs in the first place.

Gemini were really aiming at the educational market, in fact at the large user base enjoyed by the BBC machine. Unfortunately for them the two markets never really overlapped. Their failure to read the market correctly lost them a lot of money but doesn't detract from the usefulness of their kit in transferring data from other machine formats. Of course, it did look a bit odd with the cables hanging out of the front of the PCW but this made it easy to physically change drives.

Pace hits up

The most straightforward way of getting a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " drive onto the PCW machines is now the unit supplied by Pace Technology. This can be bought for around £185 including VAT from any large mail order company – comb the ads in 8000 Plus for the best deal. The Pace drive features its own power supply, a connecting ribbon cable and a switch on the back to change it from an 80 track to a forty track drive.

Also included is the software you need to transfer files from a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " IBM compatible PC disc. Called TDOS this is an efficient and reliable program.

Fitting the new 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " drive couldn't be more straightforward. You will need a Phillips screwdriver with a

long shank and a table with a blanket across it to protect the screen (you could work on a carpeted floor). No other tools are required.

Turn off the PCW and disconnect from the mains. Unplug the printer ribbon cable, the power supply lead and then the keyboard. Unscrew the RS232 interface if you have one and lay the PCW screen down on the blanket. You will see two recessed screws at the top of the machine and two at the bottom. Undo these and put them in a dish (so you don't lose them).

Two smaller screws are located above and below the expansion port (the strip of board just below the printer port). Remove these and put them with the others. The back half of the casing can now be gently eased off to expose the inside of the PCW. Resist the urge to fiddle and don't touch any part of the tube or anything else you don't need to, including dusting and running it under the tap!

Ribbon development

Next to the existing disc drive (the big metal box) you will see some ribbon cables. One is connected to the drive already fitted and the other has a plastic tie holding it back. Cut the plastic tie (but not the ribbon cable) to release it. There is also a small connector for the second disc drive power supply but you won't be using it.

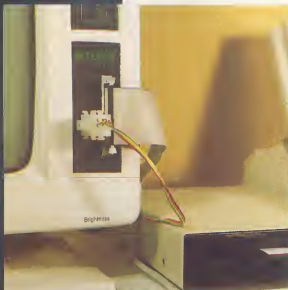
Now you have to hold the casing above the PCW as if replacing it. Put your hand in underneath and carefully feed the ribbon cable connector out through the printer port. You will need about 2" clear. So far, so good. Now the awkward part. With the ribbon cable still through the printer port hole lower the casing completely back onto the machine. You must make sure

Jump to it

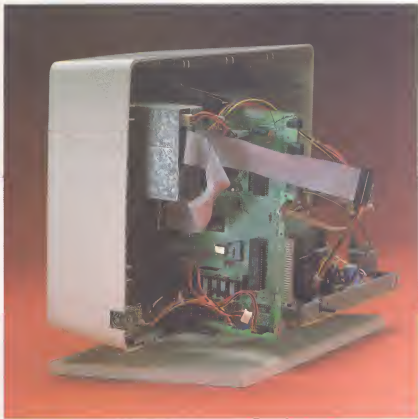
Most disc drives have jumpers on which tell the disc drive circuitry which disc drive it is (A: B: C: etc) These are usually arranged in a bank and can be from 3 to 8 in number. Some have soldered links but most have either small dip switches or links like little staples. They will be numbered from 0 or 1. If they are numbered from 0 you need the link across 1 and if numbered from 1 then you need link 2. On the Pace drive you won't have to worry about this.



FEATURE



The Intergem provides BBC compatible connectors enabling a wide range of drives to be fitted with standard BBC cables



When the back is removed from the PCW the spare ribbon connector will be tied up with the power lead. Snip the tie and pull the ribbon cable free

Vanished into thin air

This company wrote the transfer programs for the Intergem and then vanished. 8000 Plus would like to hear from anyone involved in the company regarding the status of their software.

the board edge connector, the printer connector and the printer power supply connector all line up; don't force anything. There is plenty of room for the ribbon cable to emerge alongside the printer connector.

With everything in position simply replace the six screws, sigh deeply, and make yourself a nice cup of tea. You deserve it. Now plug everything back into your PCW.

You will need to fit an ordinary mains plug to the Pace drive power supply cable. The ribbon cable from the Pace drive terminates in a connector that attaches to the PCW ribbon connector. There are slots on the side so it can't go on the wrong way around. Connect the two up and plug the Pace drive into the mains.

For obscure technical reasons you need to put a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " disc in the Pace drive before turning on the PCW in order for the PCW to know the second drive is there (but don't use the disc supplied, use either an old or a new one kept specially

for the purpose). Connect the new drive and turn it on before turning on the PCW. Now just start the PCW in LocoScript or CP/M and the screen should announce the presence of two drives.

A real DOS

Once started you can use the new 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " drive as if it were a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive, and perfectly satisfactory it is to. But a new flexibility has been added to your PCW. The TDOS software supplied by Pace will allow your PCW to use the discs from PC type machines.

There is no documentation supplied simply because the program is so easy to use. Just type `TDOS` at the `A>` and up it comes. All the prompts are there on screen.

All this information on fitting a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " drive applies equally well to fitting a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive. This is the new standard in the MS-DOS world (although Apricot have been using them for years). A 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive with its own power supply can be bought from Cumana for £106.89 inclusive of VAT. This makes it by far the cheapest of all the second drive options available for the PCW.

There isn't a great deal of compatibility between the first and second drive on the 8000 series machines anyway and with the 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " discs being as sturdy as the 3" variety and a lot cheaper it can make sense to use one as a second drive even if you don't need to transfer files from other computers.

This brings up the first nail clipping in the pizza, the ribbon cable. If you choose to buy a drive from someone other than Pace then you will need a cable made up. This isn't a particularly technical operation though you will need a small vice to clamp the cable connectors together with. Alternatively, any reasonably competent electronics or computer dealer will be able to make you up a cable. It should cost somewhere between £10 and £15 depending on how keen they are to do it. The box should give them all the information they need.

9512 owners read this

A non standard second drive on the PCW 9512 works exactly the same as on an 8255. Getting at the cable is different though. Turn off the machine and remove keyboard and printer as above. Take out the top and bottom pairs of screws and the two hidden under round covers at the side. Keep them safe. Now slide the cover backward and lift off. You will see the spare cables underneath the lower of the two boards. You can cut the tie and pull out the cable without dismantling the machine but it is a tight squeeze.

Take the ribbon cable to the back of the

machine and tape it loosely to the spare printer port. Now replace the cover and ease the connector through the printer port hole in the cover. There is about an inch of spare cable. Slide the cover all the way home and re-assemble. From this point everything that applies to the 8255 applies equally to the 9512.

For complete details of the insides of the 9512 see the May 88 issue of 8000 Plus (Issue 20) on how to fit a standard 3" second drive to the 9512.

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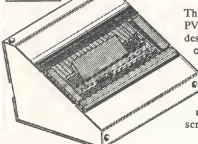


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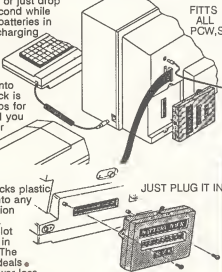
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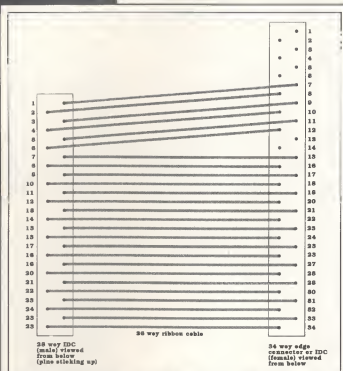
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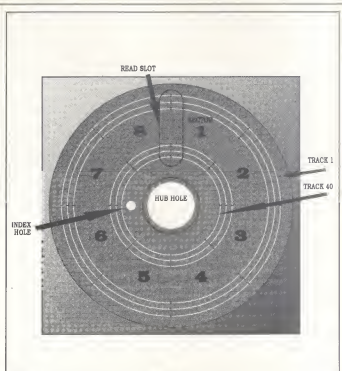
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825611	PCW8256/512 Service Manual.....	£12.00	£12.00
910171	PCW8256/512 On/off Power Switch.....	£3.25	£3.25

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Wiring details of disc cable connector. Although the pins are in fact parallel rows they have been shown offset for clarity



Typical layout of tracks and sectors — If only they were all like that

Adventure games

The software situation is a shade on the murky side. As discussed Pace include a utility to read 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ 40 track double sided discs using the PCW, which is fairly close to being a standard, however they don't include anything to write to them or to read the new 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " discs on which the MS-DOS industry is now standardising.

Advantage (0242 224340) sell a utility

called MIHO for £19.95 which they claim will read and write to both 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " PC discs from the PCW. There are various utilities in the public domain to read foreign discs, some of which work and some of which don't. The best of the software is undoubtedly that which was written for the Intergem, but unfortunately the status of those programs is now uncertain.

Gemini grounded

Gemini Marketing collapsed, unfortunately, and a company called Digita took over their software. Digita didn't feel they could handle the hardware side of the business and so the Intergem died. However, Digita may be able to organise an Intergem for you for about £50 and will pass on enquiries. Contact them on 03954 5059 if you're interested.

Suspect description

Once you understand something of the inner workings of discs it becomes obvious why there should be problems reading discs between different machines. The way in which the data is arranged on the disc is called the **format**. These are simple in principle but complex in implementation. We'll stick to our principles.

All disc systems work by first dividing the disc into concentric and ever diminishing circles called **tracks**. These tracks are then further subdivided around the disc into small segments called **sectors**. That is the first and last thing manufacturers agree on.

The disc can have various numbers of tracks although there are only two common choices. Most discs will be either 40 tracks per side or 80 tracks per side. A few rogue formats can still be found with 35 tracks though these are increasingly rare. The disc can have tracks on both sides or only one side, known sensibly enough as double sided and single sided respectively.

All the tracks have to be numbered so that the computer can find them. The track numbers on single sided discs can start at 0 or 1 and go from the middle to

the outside or from the outside to the middle. There are various systems for numbering the tracks on double sided discs.

The second side can be a continuation of the first side track numbers, so that on a forty track disc numbered from 0 – 39 outside to middle the other side would be 40 to 79 middle to outside. Alternatively the tracks could be 0 on top and 1 directly underneath on the second side, then 2 on top and 3 on the second side. Once again, the tracks on both sides could be numbered the same and only the sectors numbered differently. For example from 1 to 9 on side 1 and from 10 to 18 on side 2 (as on the 40 track IBM MS-DOS machines).

For example: one side of a disc in the A drive of an 8256 or 8512 carries 180k (173k after CP/M has nabbed 7k for its own use). This is split up into 40 tracks of 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ k each. There are 9 sectors per track, each storing 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ k. Suppose you're saving a 5k file to a disc with 5k of space left; that 5k is made up ten free sectors which could be scattered about anywhere on the disc. The 5k file is written to the disc in 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ k chunks into the free sectors, and the directory makes a note of where each bit is so that it can find it later on. (It follows that this takes more time than if the disc were empty – the drive head has to move around all over the disc to the free spaces. On an empty disc it could write to the next ten consecutive sectors). ■

● Thanks to Pace Technology for the loan of a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " drive and to Cumana for the loan of a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " drive. Their telephone numbers are: Pace Technology (0274) 488211; Cumana (0485) 503121.



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Chibase 3.0 is the latest, updated version of the database with a difference. Conventional databases are great for constant format data such as names and addresses but useless for variable format data such as chunks of text. Chibase is a 'free text' database aimed at writers, researchers – anyone who needs to keep textual information on disc and draw from it.

The 'free format' plus indexing facility is the same as before; now, however, an import/export ASCII option has been included as well as a Chain Delete facility. You're offered the choice of either browsing through an ASCII file of text that has been prepared in a word processor and importing selected parts of that into the database, or alternatively, writing text to an ASCII file within the database to be then exported into a LocoScript document.

The Chain Delete option lets you work your way methodically through a database, record by record, deleting the ones you don't want any more whilst keeping the ones that you do.

Chibase basically consists of a database of records each of which contains a number of keys (or highlighted words) to make an index with. Say you wanted to create a database of recipes; each record would consist of a recipe. In each recipe, you might choose to highlight certain of the ingredients for inclusion in the index.

Then, by listing the index, you'd be presented with an index of all the ingredients highlighted throughout the database preceded by the number of records in which they appear. Shark fins, for example, might appear in only two of the recipes whereas butter might appear in thirty of them.

Back at the Main Menu, you 'recall'; by typing in an enquiry (say, CUSTARD) all the records containing that particular highlighted ingredient will be listed.

The great thing about Chibase is that it is a 'free format' database; you decide your own record format simply by typing text into a box on screen using the usual keys for editing.

The program also incorporates a useful Form format which acts like a record template. Basic information prompts can be displayed on the screen like a form which you can fill in: you might want Title, Ingredients, Directions and Cooking Time ready and waiting in each record in which to insert the variable data.

You have to leave Chibase through the [L] option at the Main Menu. You can't just reset your machine because you will lose all the data files that the program needs to locate its various records. In an emergency the program has incorporated a Rebuild utility which can automatically regenerate the indexes.

Chibase is expensive and it does have its inflexibilities: you're forced to work with large files, you can't run it from the memory and it's only ever going to be of real use to you as a reference package. You also have to make all your own adjustments to the PROFILE.SUB file. On the other hand, its ability to amend, sort and recall records make it a well-rounded and useful tool if you're stuck with a large amount of data where the subject matter is highly variable. ■

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Let's just call it AYE. This is the latest version of the package originally designed for the experienced programmer who needs a fast, smoothly-flowing and professional-looking graphics output. The main addition is a set of printer control routines which were missed in earlier versions.

The program is a library of machine code routines which you can use in any language from Mallard Basic to machine code. These routines allow you to produce graphics and graphical effects of the same standard that you can usually only find on professional software. Also included on the disc are a number of demo programs which take you through different ways of using the various routines.

The routines are very wide ranging and certainly represent good value for money: you can, for instance, have control of the disc drive motors, experiment with sound routines, draw and erase lines, plot and erase single points

(pixels), fill shapes, alter the character set, send user defined graphics (shapes you make up for yourself) and double height (and width) characters to the printer and so on. There is also ample provision for creating sprites; sprites are those little creatures the size of a few characters of text which you can move around the screen at incredible speeds.

However, most of the new routines are concerned with printer control – setting margins, bold and italic print and so on. These routines were not in the old version and are rather awkward to set otherwise.

The manual is comprehensive: although the package is generally only recommended for relatively experienced programmers, there are some simple, step-by-step instructions for the intrepid novice explorer to follow. There are also some nice touches of humour which bring light relief to otherwise potentially lethal documentation. For the hardened programmer, the full Z80 source code of the routines is also provided. It was prepared with HiSoft's Devpac 80, so some modifications may be necessary to make it compatible with other assemblers.

Graphics, The Universe and Everything is impressive. It's got loads of utilities and is quite fast. It will tend to be a bit cumbersome from BASIC, but makes up for that by being accessible from other assembler programs. ■

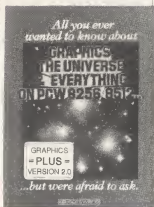
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3/5
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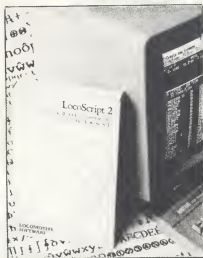
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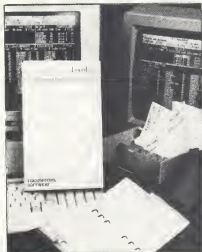
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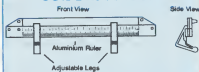


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For most of us, PCWs are a useful addition to the study or the office. For Peter Bayliss, it's rather more than that...

It was a novel experience for me to be ascending a flight of stairs. Anyway, that was what the computer told me I was doing. Gone were the problems of access which disabled people like myself have to face. Of course, all role-players in text adventure games are given able-bodied status. There are no wheelchairs in fantasy scenarios.

The text adventures are a relatively recent (though very enjoyable) distraction. All the same, I bought my Amstrad 8256 in the autumn of '85 primarily for word processing.

As an undergraduate with the Open University and a published writer, I could see enormous benefits in efficiency and time-saving. But they weren't just the usual ones. For me, personally, word processing meant a great deal more.

I suffer from a disease of the nervous system called Friedrich's Ataxia, and the past 17 years of my life have been spent in a wheelchair. For most of that time I worked as a clerk for the GEC in Coventry. But increasing problems with handwriting meant early retirement. And so, with this prospect in mind, I had to consider how to fill my days.

The deterioration in handwriting meant, as it does for others with FA, an increasing reliance on a typewriter. However, I was perhaps luckier than some – an early interest in creative writing meant I'd been periodically using a typewriter for years before FA was diagnosed. So I was already familiar with the keyboard, even if my reactions were a bit slow and uncertain.

Writing was an interest that I wanted to pursue, but it was such an insular and self-reliant business. And with rejections outnumbering acceptances, success seemed very elusive. What I needed was some discipline from outside. It was a definite goal that I wanted, something that could be realistically aimed for and achieved, something to give my life meaning.

As one door closes...

I knew of others with the same disability who were studying for a degree with the Open University. And the more I thought about it, the more it seemed that the sense of discipline and purpose in OU study provided an answer.

All written work, could be typed. This included the exam, which could be taken at home in the presence of an outside invigilator and with extra time if needed.

I enjoyed the work, but my academic essays used to take such a long time. I would type them out once, do all the corrections and re-arranging by hand, then type a second

copy. All my writing, both creative and academic, used to be done in this same way. And, of course, this was where the PCW proved to be such a godsend. In fact, without it I would probably have given up years ago – drowned in a sea of Liquid Paper and tears of frustration.

When I first got my Amstrad in '85, computing and word processing were completely new to me. I had done some work on VDUs at the GEC, but that was simply following instructions to get information from a database. I knew nothing about micros and floppy discs. And the formidable-looking manuals seemed more confusing than helpful.

"It's simple," said the man in the computer shop. "All you do is..." And he launched into a complicated explanation which I felt would have left an Einstein groping blindly.

Now being in a wheelchair often makes people treat me as being a bit dim. So I try to cultivate an intellectual aura to dispel any misunderstanding. And as an Open University student, I feel that I don't need to try too hard these days.

However, the computer man seemed determined to baffle me with his 'superior' knowledge. And he might have been speaking a foreign language for all I knew.

It has been said that jargon is the private language of those who need to say something new that can't be said in the existing language. Okay, fair enough. But if we buy a micro we are plunged head-first into a jargon jungle.

Wade down

Anyway, after several weeks (or was it months?) of wading through the manuals, I was finally in a position to write and save my first document. And I treated every successful

Open sesame

The Open University is open to all students who wish to study for a degree, regardless of prior qualifications (or lack of them). Details on courses and enrolment can be obtained from The Central Enquiries Service, Walton Hall, Box 71, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AQ, tel 0528 653231. BBC2 carries a lot of O.U. broadcasts and often gives further details too, of course.



Peter's 8256 has reduced the time it takes him to produce a finished manuscript by about half. He uses it to type all his essays as well as his exams. The O.U. is an ideal learning medium for disabled students, like Peter, who can work their way through the course by correspondence.

advance in my knowledge of the PCW like a conquest of Everest. 'Eureka!' gradually replaced the curses which were more frequent at the beginning.

All this took place over the winter, after the finish of the OU year (which runs from February till October). It must be said that Amstrad manuals and Open University work definitely don't mix!

My creative writing is done mostly over the winter between OU courses. Although I've lost count of the number of rejection slips, I do occasionally manage to get work published. And I'm very proud of those successes.

I've just finished writing a user guide for a company called Synaptics Ltd., who make electronic environmental controls for disabled people. Having wrestled with the Amstrad manual, I have great sympathy for anyone trying to interpret user instructions.

I write a regular column called 'Pete's Patch' in FAX, the quarterly Newsletter of the Friedrich's Ataxia Group. This is something that can't get put off till the winter, so it's another instance of where the PCW has enabled me to cope.

Play time

One of my next projects is to adapt one of my stories into a radio play. So for that reason I was most interested in the article on Play Writing which appeared in the May '88 issue of 8000 Plus. The information on hanging tabs was especially useful.

I bought LocoScript 2 in the autumn of '87. Amongst its many advances over LocoScript 1, there was one seemingly minor detail that I particularly approved of. The key in the middle of the cursor keys – no 2 with the portcullis symbol – no longer beeped when it was accidentally pressed.

For someone like myself, with a disability of the nervous system, unexpected beeps are not recommended – that is, unless one wishes to make a close inspection of the ceiling!

Even with the latest LocoScript, unexpected beeps are something one has to prepare oneself for on occasion. Until they come up with a totally beeperless version, my only advice is to be prepared and hold onto your hat. I've not hit the ceiling too many times so far.

I use a plastic covering on my keyboard. It protects against dust, tea or coffee spills, and prevents deterioration of the lettering. It can be taken off to be cleaned.

The keys are not quite so sensitive when you're typing through it. But this can be an advantage when one's reactions are a bit unreliable and adjoining keys can sometimes be accidentally touched. So it can be a partial safeguard against unexpected beeps.

I had my 8256 upgraded to 8512 at the beginning of '88. This allowed me access to the large 160k dictionary with LocoSpell, a great help. And apart from its function as a spelling checker, I was pleased to discover that it counted the number of words.

I carefully followed the original instructions, putting onto my LocoScript disc the program which automatically copied into M the dictionary in B. However, I soon found that the drive was rejecting my A-formatted disc. So I have now put it onto a disc that is formatted in B, and I've had no problems since.

Like Steven Matthews in his amusing article, 'Casting Spells' (November '88 issue of 8000 Plus), I've become fascinated with the way LocoSpell translates proper names.

Steven had wondered where



Thesis your life

All my manuscripts are now typed just once, all corrections being done on the screen. It reduces the time taken by about half.

The same information, for identification purposes, has to appear at the top of each sheet of my OU essay. Whereas I used to carefully type this on every time, I now simply insert it in the header of my 'document setup'. And page numbers are easily set up in the footer.

However, they were not so easily set up with my first LocoScript (1.0) which had its fair share of bugs. I nearly got my knickers in a twist trying to put a page number code in the 'document setup' before realising that I was attempting the impossible. So I wrote to Amsoft (in their pre-Locomotive days) who sent me an upgraded copy of the software.

Page numbers in abundance thereafter!

Numerical references in the text of an essay, I later discovered, could be handled easily. One first types the references in full in the essay, then copies them into a block and substitutes superscript figures (by typing [+]¹ and [-]² before and after).

You can then bring the references out on a separate sheet at the end. The number for each reference is best remembered if you save the first on block 1, the second on block 2, etc.

My template for OU essays contains three layouts. The first is for the question, the second for the main body of text, and the third (with indented margins) for any lengthy quotations.

some of the words (the name-substitutes) came from. Well, I think it has access to the same dictionary as my Computer Scramble – with obscure words that never graced the pages of more regular dictionaries!

Not in the script

One of the few regrets I had about changing over from my typewriter to the PCW was that I previously had a daisywheel with a nice informal script for personal letters.

In fact, my original idea had been to use the typewriter as a printer. But what changed my mind was the cost of an interface (£100-£200) compared to buying the printer as part of an integral package along with the monitor and keyboard. As it happens, I'm pleased with this setup. The dot matrix printer is so much more versatile.

Anyway, my latest acquisition is Locomotive's Locomot which enables me to write in Penman script. So my personal letters do now have a friendly and informal look. In fact, those who don't know me might wonder how I'd written in 'longhand'. A very pleasing effect, but before I could use the fonts, I had to exchange my LocoScript 2.05 for a new version (Locofont only works with 2.13 or later.)

The script seems intended for sheets of individual A5. But I discovered that if I have it on double proportionally spaced and with a scale pitch of 12, it suits my continuous stationery very well.

At the time of writing this article, I am waiting for the results of my OU exam. If I pass, then I shall have qualified for a BA degree.

When that happens, I shall feel that I've metaphorically ascended that flight of stairs. I will be proudly standing on the top step, scanning the horizon for new challenges. But I will not forget the debt of gratitude that I owe to the Amstrad PCW. ■

PhDCW

The PCW is of course an ideal machine for writing a thesis on. It works out cheaper than getting your manuscripts typed up, you can make amendments easily, bibliography compilation can be automated and parts of your text can be cut out at a stroke to make up papers. (If you have a 728 too you can make notes silently in a library and cable them directly across into the PCW to polish up!) Plus LocoScript 2 has every foreign accent, foreign script and scientific symbol you need even for post doc work. 8000 Plus will be carrying a feature on these writing with a PCW in a couple of months.

References

- 1 - Hapson, *The Enlightenment*, p. 37
- 2 - *LETTER XVI* (On Sir Isaac Newton's Opticks From 1710-14, p. 20)
- 3 - *The Age of Enlightenment*, vol. 2, p. 139
- 4 - *Unité 17-18*, p. 44
- 5 - *Newton's Life of Captain James Cook*, p. 96

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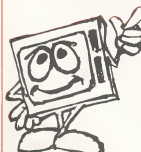
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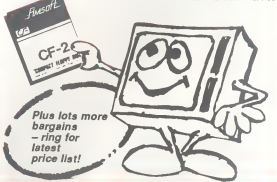
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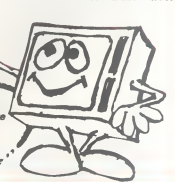
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ON WITH THE ASSEMBLY

Crack that machine code! Steve Patient continues his series on assembly language

To quote from Confucius, 'I heard and I forgot; I saw and I remembered; I did and I understood.' He obviously never wrote machine code. We're going to do: straight into it this month with an assembler listing to type in. You don't need any special programs - you have all you need on your PCW systems discs.

How to make it work

Having typed the listing in, you then assemble it - turn it into a .COM file - as follows.

- a) You've got an ASCII file PRINT2.ASM. On this disc you should copy MAC.COM and HEX.COM from your CP/M disc (side 3 on 8000s).
- b) Enter CP/M and insert this disc. At the A> prompt type MAC PRINT2[RETURN].
- c) Then type HEX.COM PRINT2[RETURN].
- d) Now there should be a file PRINT2.COM on your disc. Typing PRINT2[RETURN] runs the program.

If you work from drive M: on a text editor then when the assembler throws up errors you can alter the listing quickly. The listing file must have an .ASM filetype or MAC won't talk to it.

After c) a DIR will show a lot of extra files about. They will be called PRINT2.HEX, PRINT2.SYM and PRINT2.PRN. The last one is worth looking at (eg. with TYPE). It gives all the hex values alongside the code. This is useful for getting those DATA statements for BASIC listings.

This is a type-in listing, like any BASIC listing, except it's in assembly language. You need it as plain ASCII, eg. do it as a LocoScript document then make an ASCII file ([F1] Loco 2, [F7] Loco 1). Call the ASCII file PRINT2.ASM (or anything else ending .ASM).

Then you'll turn PRINT2.ASM into a .COM file which runs from CP/M's A> prompt. The program itself asks for your name and then greets you back; not artificial intelligence yet but it's a start.

The first thing you will notice about the assembler listing is that this listing has hardly any numbers in it at all. Instead of numbers we've used **symbolic names** which the assembler will translate into numbers when it does its stuff.

The second thing to notice is that the assembler listing is divided into fields. There are four **fields** in all into which information can be put. These fields must be separated by either spaces or tabs or both. Traditionally tabs are used because they give a neat, readable, layout. Each line must be divided from the next by a [RETURN] and the whole file should be in ASCII.

Field one is the **label** field and must begin in column one; field two is the **opcode** field and must have at least one space or tab between it and the label or the beginning of the line (otherwise it would be treated as a label). Field three is the **operand** field and must have an opcode and a space or tab before it. The fourth field is a **comment** field and must be preceded by a semi-colon if used.

The comment field can be the only field on a line and need have nothing after the semi-colon; however, do not leave completely blank lines in a listing. The label field can also occupy a line on its own, this is sometimes done to make the code easier to follow.

Since it is so easy to comment assembler programs, and so easy to forget just what they are doing, always explain everything. There is no reason not to comment every line. You will be glad you did. If you want to explain some part of the code more fully then take as many lines as you like and simply begin them all with a colon. It will make no difference to the size of the final COM file as the assembler simply ignores comments.

Listing safely

The first thing in the listing is the name of the program on a comment line. It should be followed by a version number and any revisions if you alter the code at a later date; all these comments help keep track of things and while they seem a fuss to start with they make life much easier when there are 150 source files on the disc with names like TEST1.ASM, TEST234.ASM. But you get the idea.

The first actual instruction is a **pseudo opcode**, actually an instruction to the assembler. In our example it is **ORG 100H**. This tells the assembler to take 0100H as the starting point for the assembly process. 0100H is the address at which all CP/M programs load and from where they run but if for some reason you wanted code assembled from 8000H then you could get that by beginning **ORG 8000H**.

Next we have a **jmp START** which skips over all the data the program uses to the beginning of the actual code. The assembler will work out where that is.

On the following line the comment is **;;EQUATES**. An **equate** is yet another pseudo opcode. It makes a label equal to a number so that we only have to remember a label name for the rest of the program. Again this adds to the readability of the code. Once assigned an equate remains in force for the rest of the program and cannot be treated as a variable. It also means you can change a number throughout the program just by altering the **EQUATE**.

The jump to 0005 (which is how we call the operating system) has been equated with **BDOS**. In a long program we could glance through picking up all the operating system calls just by looking for the label. Too easy for words.

(Assembler buffers will notice that the labels for equates don't actually need a colon after them with the MAC assembler.)

Stringing you along

The comment **;;SCREEN CODES** introduces the next section, and coincidentally ushers in a new kind of pseudo opcode. This one is **DB** which simply means include all of the following data as it comes. This data can be strings, 'This is a string', which must be in single quotes, or hexadecimal codes **ABH,COH,12H**. A number with no H after it will be treated as decimal. It is also possible to include expressions but we aren't going into that here.

Any time we reference the label **CLEAR** the assembler will substitute the address of the string of bytes. We've terminated all these strings with the \$ symbol for the benefit of the call **BDOS 9** which prints a string to the screen until it finds a dollar sign. Very useful call.

Almost all programs have to have messages. In any program intended for future use there will be instructions on using the program, requests for input and error messages. These are essential; there is nothing more infuriating than being confronted by a blank screen and expected to guess what you have to do to make it work.

There is no reason why all these messages, etc., shouldn't go at the end of the program rather than the beginning, or even be interspersed through the code, but putting it all at the beginning seems to be more convenient, after all, that's where you start.

Finally we reach the code proper. This is labelled **START**

Calling BDOS

A good book on CP/M is CP/M: The Software Bus by A.J. Clarke, J. M. Eaton and D. Powys-Lybbe. Details of all BDOS calls are contained therein.

Speaking technically

Warm Boot
Re-installing CP/M
Cold Boot
Reloading the whole system
Stack
Last in-first out area of memory
CP/M
Computer Program Monitor
the operating system
BDOS
Where all CP/M calls go to do their tricks
MAC
A program that turns assembler into Hex
HEX.COM
A program that turns Hex into bytes

simply to avoid having to guess where things begin. Always label and lay out programs in the same way. Getting into the habit of laying things out in a standard manner will pay dividends.

The rest is in code

The program continues by loading reg DE with the address of CLEAR: and calls the PRINT subroutine which makes the actual BDOS call. BDOS 9 needs the address of the string in DE, a number 9 in reg C and then a CALL 0005 to the BDOS. BDOS is synonymous with CP/M and handles all the difficult things like putting a character on the screen or making the disc drives work. All you have to do is learn how to ask CP/M to do these things.

We repeat the same process with the INTRO. Note that the INTRO string doesn't have a dollar sign at the end, this means that all of INTRO is printed out as well, including the carriage returns and line feeds. If you need to print out a

long message this is the easiest way to do it.

Now we come to the GETNM routine which has been started differently. It doesn't make any difference to the code but looks more readable. The dollar sign here simply returns an address to the assembler.

The routine GETNM uses BDOS 1 to get a keypress from the keyboard and stores it at the end of the program beginning from the location labelled NMSTR: As each character is captured and stored the address held in reg HL is incremented by the instruction INX H and the loop repeats with a jump back to GETNM. This process continues until a carriage return is detected: this is done by using a compare instruction, CPI 0DH, compare immediate, which just compares a number with whatever is held in Reg A and sets the sign bits in the flag register depending on the result of an imaginary subtraction, nothing is changed in reg A.

To complete the whole process we need to print the name, or whatever other string we've captured, to the screen. We do this in HELLOUT: First we load reg A with the dollar sign and save it to the end of the captured string. Then we print the HELLO string and finally we print the NMSTR string that we have just created.

The RET instruction right at the end had no corresponding CALL and so will pop the value at the bottom of the stack, which is always zero, and thus causes a return to the JMP at the location 0000H. This will make CP/M perform a 'warm start', giving you back the A> and everything is as it was. It really is that easy.

Fields fantastic

LABEL	OPCODE	OPERAND	COMMENT
LABEL:	OPCODE	OPERAND	COMMENT
:COMMENT			

These are all valid forms of assembler listing lines. There must be a space or a tab between the fields; only labels or comments can begin in the first column and lines must have something on them even if it's only a semi-colon.

A hex on it

Earlier assemblers all produced Hex files, in which each byte is represented by a number like C4, because files frequently had to be sent over communications links which only allowed 7 bit characters (teletypes for instance). This meant that values over 127 couldn't be sent. The answer was to convert them to hex first. You will find that PRINTHEX can be typed to the screen.

Stacking up

The stack is an area of memory where values of registers can be saved. It is called a stack because the last thing on is always the first thing off. The current top (really the bottom) of the stack is pointed to by the register called the STACK POINTER. The stack always grows downward in memory. The stack can be used to pass values to subroutines.

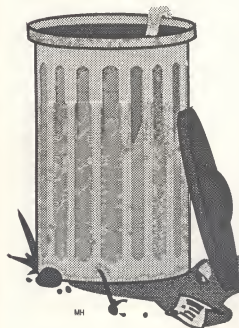
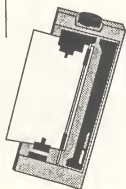
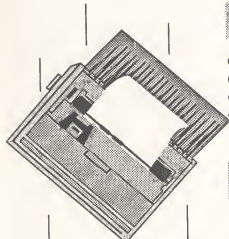
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;*****PROG TO PRINT MESSAGE AT SPECIFIC LOCATION ON SCREEN*****
;
; ORG 100H ;TELL MAC WHERE TO PUT PROGRAM
JMP START ;JUMP OVER DATA TO ACTUAL CODE
;
; **EQUATES
BDOS EQU 0005H ;WHERE WE GO TO GET CPM TO DO STUFF
SCPNT EQU 9 ;GIVE NICE NAMES TO BDOS CALLS-SCREEN PRINT
GETCH: EQU 1 ;GET A CHARACTER FROM KEYBOARD
;
; **SCREEN CODES
CLEAR: DB 1BH,45H,'$' ;CLEAR THE SCREEN
HOME: DB 1BH,48H,'$' ;MOVE CURSOR TO HOME
LOCATE: DB 1BH,59H,2FH,34H,'$' ;CURSOR MOVE STRING
;
; **MESSAGES
INTRO: DB 'THIS PROGRAM WILL PRINT HELLO AND YOUR NAME.'
INTRO2: DB 0DH,0AH,'WHAT IS YOUR NAME? TYPE IT IN AND RET',0DH,0AH,'$'
HELLO: DB 'WELL, HELLO THERE, $'
;
; **START OF PROGRAM CODE
;
START: LXI D,CLEAR
CALL PRINT
LXI D,HOME
CALL PRINT
LXI D,INTRO ;UP TO NOW ALL WE'VE DONE IS CLEAR THE SCREEN AND
CALL PRINT ;PRINT THE INTRODUCTION TO THE SCREEN
LXI H,NMSTR ;LOAD HL WITH ADDRESS FOR NAME TO LIVE
GETNM: EQU $ ;VALID AND READABLE WAY TO START ROUTINE
PUSH H ;SAVE VALUE IN HL BEFORE BDOS CALL
MVI C,GETCH
CALL BDOS
POP H ;GET SAVED VALUE OF HL BACK
CPI 0DH ;DID WE GET A RETURN?
JZ HELLOUT ;IF WE DID - QUIT LOOP
MOV M,A ;SAVE CHAR IN A TO ARRAY
INX H ;INCREMENT ARRAY POINTER TO NEXT POSITION
JMP GETNM ;LOOP FOR NEXT CHARACTER
HELLOUT: EQU $
MVI A,'$' ;TERMINATE ARRAY WITH DOLLAR SIGN
MOV M,A
LXI D,LOCATE/MOVE CURSOR TO MIDDLE OF SCREEN
CALL PRINT
LXI D,HELLO ;PRINT HELLO STRING
CALL PRINT
LXI D,NMSTR ;ADDRESS OF NAME STRING
CALL PRINT
RET ;THIS CALLS BOTTOM OF STACK - 00 -FOR WARM BOOT
;
; **PRINT SUBROUTINE
PRINT: MVI C,SCPNT
CALL BDOS
RET
NMSTR: EQU $ ;PUT YOUR NAME AFTER ALL THE CODE IN CASE IT'S LONG
AT SPECIFIC LOCATION ON SCREEN*****
;

```


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24 PIN PRINTERS ARE GOOD FOR 9512 OWNERS TOO

The PCW9512's built-in printer gives good quality results but it is noisy and slow – and it can only produce a small range of characters. You cannot even mix upright and italic characters in the same document. A 24 Pin Printer and the 24 Pin Printer Drivers disc will give you the full range of characters (symbols, accents, Greek, even Cyrillic!), without sacrificing quality.

If you're thinking of getting a better printer, then how about a NEC P6 Plus. We think this is the best price/performance printer around and it's available from us at £549 + VAT. We'll also throw in a connecting cable and printer software FREE! Let us know if you've got an 8000 or a 9512 so we can send the right cable – and remember you'll need a CPS8256 Printer Interface if you have an 8256 or 8512. If your budget is tighter, then how about the NEC P2200 at £349 + VAT – not quite as fast or rugged as the P6, but still exceptional value.

If you've already got a 24 pin printer (such as an Amstrad LQ3500/LQ5000, Epson LQ series, NEC P2200, P6 Plus or P7 Plus, or a Star NB24...) just add the 24 Pin Printer Drivers disc. For only £24.95 inc VAT you'll get more from your printer than ever before!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> CPS 8256 Printer Interface | £49.95 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

FOR THE 9512

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------------|
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(* requires LocoScript 2)

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PLEASE NOTE: EASY LABELLER is a purpose designed program and NOT a database adaption. I he need to deal with disc files is NOT REQUIRED, THOUSANDS of satisfied customers, both experienced and first time users, have found EASY LABELLER invaluable for producing MAILING LISTS, TICKETS, CONTINUOUS ENVELOPE ADDRESSING as well as a QUICK and EASY filing system.

STATIONARY E-TYPE

Digita's 'revolutionary' typewriter emulator is here:
Rob Ainsley investigates

E-TYPE

£24.95 ● Digita International (0395 45059)

● All PCWs

It doesn't sound promising – paying twenty-five quid to turn your five hundred pound PCW back into a fifty quid typewriter. Anyway, you've got 'Direct Printing' in LocoScript already, which imitates a typewriter pretty well. So what does E-Type do that LocoScript doesn't?

Pressing D in Loco's disc manager lets you output line-by-line to the printer. You type your text, edit if necessary, and as soon as you hit [RETURN] it gets sent to the printer. By pressing [PTR] then [6] you can alter the left offset, and so move the print head rightwards any amount you like. This enables you to fill in forms, for example, and use the PCW just like you would a typewriter.

On starting up E-Type you see a few commands listed and a representation of the top of a sheet of paper. As you type, the text appears on the paper which moves up just as if it were coming off a typewriter platen. You can use the cursors to move forwards, backwards or downwards, but not back over text already typed and not upwards

Mode down

You have several different modes of operation: you can have each line printed (just like Loco's direct printing), or go for character-by-character printing. This is what you'd use for forms as you can press the space bar to move across the form until you're in the right place for the slot to fill. It's rather quicker and more convenient than Loco's Direct Printing. You can also have things aligned against the right margin or have them printed out justified, both of which can be done in LocoScript. You can't centre text as LocoScript lets you.

A word count facility lets you know how many words you've typed (for those forms which demand why you want to succeed in not less than 2,000 words) and various options are open such as setting margins, typing in bold, turning the bleeper on and off, word wrap and so on.

When you finish typing you have the option of saving the format you've been working in (margins, tabs, mode of operation and so on) for another time. Of course you can't do this in Direct Printing in LocoScript.

The theory is all well and good, but there are a lot of problems. The manual – while professionally put together, well up to the usual Digita standards – is not specific to the PCW and rather irritatingly has 'Not available of (sic) the PCW' after many functions described. It misses out a lot of

Though the PCW replaced the typewriter, there are times when you don't actually need the full power of a word processor to do the job in hand – when filling in a form, for instance. LocoScript has a direct printing feature to imitate a typewriter, but E-type sets out to do it better. Does it succeed?

explanations of things everybody will find confusing. For example, on our pre-production copy many of the commands are shown on the menu as 'L' with no indication as to what 'L' means. It isn't an up-arrow ([EXTRA]-semicolon) – it is in fact standard computing jargon for the [CONTROL] key, which on your PCW is [ALT]. But how many typists, given a PCW and this program and told to get on with it, would know that?

Dangerous driver

If used on the 9512 there can be problems with the printer – you must rename a 'printer driver' file. If you don't you get effects like the program ceasing to work for several seconds at the end of a line, finally coming back with a helpful 'LPT not ready – Retry, Ignore or Cancel?' message, or spurious zeroes appearing at the beginning of lines.

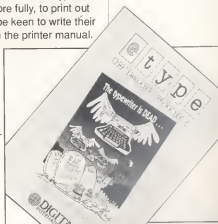
Attempts to print out a £ sign elicit a beep. Trying to turn off the beep, even armed with the knowledge that 'L means [ALT]L, is no use as this command has no effect. E-Type has facilities letting you control the printer more fully, to print out £ signs for example, but few typists will be keen to write their own printer drivers according to codes in the printer manual.

The idea behind E-Type isn't a bad one, except that it doesn't really do anything that LocoScript (which you have already for free) or Protext can't do. Our review copy had the odd bug, though Digita have said they have been fixed for the production version.

But even so, at twenty-five quid it's ridiculously overpriced. For that money you could buy Pocket Protext, or a second-hand manual typewriter, or a nice dinner for two at a good Indian restaurant. See you at the Bath Tandoori. ■

Irrelevant note

An old chestnut quiz question asks you for the longest word you can type using only the top row of the typewriter. The stock answer always given is TYPEWRITER, no ho. A shame then that PROPRIETARY, also typable on the top row only, is one letter longer.



E-TYPE PLUSES

▲ Almost as easy to use as a typewriter

MINUSES

- ▼ Review copy had the odd bug
- ▼ Does nothing significant that LocoScript can't
- ▼ Sloppy conversion for PCW
- ▼ Doesn't print £ signs

RANGE OF FEATURES
PERFORMANCE

EASE OF USE
DOCUMENTATION

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT

1/5



The E-type screen

TOMORROWS WORLD

What's in store for the PCW in the coming year? We look ahead...

What can PCW owners expect in 1989? The cynics say the PCW market is dying, that there'll be no new software, that the PCWs 'have already been discontinued'...

Howard Fisher, Locomotive Software's marketing man, disagrees. 'The market is very buoyant', he said, citing staggering advance orders for LocoFile, their database program that works from inside LocoScript. 'The PCW is still the only machine that serious home users can afford even now. Buy an Atari, for instance, and by the time you've got yourself a printer and reasonable word processing software, you've spent eight or nine hundred pounds'.

So what will Locomotive be bringing out for the PCW public? LocoScript 3? LocoDiary? LocoSpread? 'Well, we'd like to bring out everything', he said, 'but every product takes months of research and development. Let's just say that this time next year there'll certainly be one or two more products in the LocoScript 2 family'.

Locomotive have had a lot of enquiries about the possibility of a PC version of LocoScript, and they are almost certainly working on it, though it would be months before anything official were announced. Though many pundits dismiss such a program as appealing only to PCW owners who also have PCs (including of course portable PCs) it's interesting to speculate on the potential market if a PC LocoScript were to appear at or about LocoScript PCW prices. Word processors for the PC cost at least £70-£100, and ones with LocoScript's features (such as proportionally spaced justified printing, Fisher noted) rather more.

'On the hardware side, one possibility someone could take up would be a 512k memory add-on - a pack you plug in the back of the machine', he said. 'It's certainly feasible in theory'. 1024k of memory on a 9512 or 8512 sounds an interesting prospect...

Not only but also...

What else in 1989? Well, it's doubtful the much-vaunted advent of computer CDs will come to the PCW. Their fantastic capacity for data storage (500Mb, ie. 2890 three-inch discs, ie. the name and address of every working person in the UK!) is just beyond CP/M. But laser printer drivers are perfectly possible and would enable you to typeset using LocoScript plus a laser printer.

A speech synthesiser will be on the market for certain. But it's about time someone brought out a music processor for the PCW, enabling you to write and print out staves of music just like text documents.

The educational software for the PCW is still pathetically small considering the potential market. Let's have some intelligent educational packages for GCSE and home studies - this is where you at home can join in. Such programs have a reputation for being bad sellers, but that's for other machines. As we all know, the average PCW owner - not that there is such a thing - is not like the average computer owner - not that there is such a thing as that either.

Games will continue to come out at the rate of one or two a month, and the standard will continue to improve despite the comparative torpor of the PCW games market. Graphics in adventures is now a standard feature and recent games like Lancelot and Corruption are encouraging signs for the gamer in 1989. But how about a few more 'thinking' games - a PCW version of Channel 4's Countdown, Mah Jong, or Go for example?

One thing's for certain. The PCW market ain't dead yet, and despite the onslaught of 16 bit machines, Amstrad are going to sell a fair few 8000s and 9512s in 1989. And there'll be plenty for those buyers in the way of new products. ■

4: group 6/ACCOUNTS.SPR LocoSpread 7:50 10:45 15:00 15:10 15:15 15:20 15:25 15:30 15:35 15:40 15:45 15:50 15:55 16:00 16:05 16:10 16:15 16:20 16:25 16:30 16:35 16:40 16:45 16:50 16:55 17:00 17:05 17:10 17:15 17:20 17:25 17:30 17:35 17:40 17:45 17:50 17:55 18:00 18:05 18:10 18:15 18:20 18:25 18:30 18:35 18:40 18:45 18:50 18:55 19:00 19:05 19:10 19:15 19:20 19:25 19:30 19:35 19:40 19:45 19:50 19:55 20:00 20:05 20:10 20:15 20:20 20:25 20:30 20:35 20:40 20:45 20:50 20:55 21:00 21:05 21:10 21:15 21:20 21:25 21:30 21:35 21:40 21:45 21:50 21:55 22:00 22:05 22:10 22:15 22:20 22:25 22:30 22:35 22:40 22:45 22:50 22:55 23:00 23:05 23:10 23:15 23:20 23:25 23:30 23:35 23:40 23:45 23:50 23:55 24:00 24:05 24:10 24:15 24:20 24:25 24:30 24:35 24:40 24:45 24:50 24:55 25:00 25:05 25:10 25:15 25:20 25:25 25:30 25:35 25:40 25:45 25:50 25:55 26:00 26:05 26:10 26:15 26:20 26:25 26:30 26:35 26:40 26:45 26:50 26:55 27:00 27:05 27:10 27:15 27:20 27:25 27:30 27:35 27:40 27:45 27:50 27:55 28:00 28:05 28:10 28:15 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LAUNCH WINDOWS

Part 10 of the Mini Office tutorial series:
graphics from the spreadsheet

By now the workings of Mini Office's excellent graphics and spreadsheet packages are clear. And of course you can put figures from the spreadsheet directly in the graphics module to illustrate your sales figures or put life into those statistics, as you know from your manual. Except that your manual doesn't actually tell you how to do it...

Windows are the key to using and presenting your spreadsheets effectively, either by printing them out in figures or by turning them into graphs and pie charts.

So it's not surprising that windows are almost totally neglected by the manual, glossed over in the READSPRD.ME file which is supposed to help you, and are very confusing to use at first!

The principle is that you can select only certain rows and columns from your spreadsheet and put these in a window – you're allowed up to seven at a time. Just like real ones, windows must be rectangular – you can't have, say, all of row 5 and 7 and all of columns 12-14.

Once you've set up windows you can do things like print out the whole spreadsheet with a window (a totals column perhaps) in bold. Alternatively you can just print out a window by itself, or view the window on screen, thus reducing very large spreadsheets to the basics so they're a bit easier on the eye. Or you can use the data in the window in the graphics module and get it drawn straight into pie charts and bar charts – great for illustrating stats and figures. Not only does this save you re-entering information from the spreadsheet into the graphics package, it means that in the event of an update to the spreadsheet figures you update the graphics data file to correspond almost immediately.

Manual, you're a waste of space

The manual mentions nothing about windows other than that they exist. There is a file called `READSPRD.ME` which you can print out by running up `CP/M` and at the `A>` prompt pressing `[ALT]P`. The PCW beeps. Then insert your Mini Office disc, side 3, and type `TYPE READSPRD.ME`. Details on windows and graphics sets are sent to your printer. When it's finished press `[ALT]P` again to stop this 'printer echo' (the PCW doesn't beep). Whether you'll be any the wiser afterwards is another matter.

Food for thought

Consider a spreadsheet like the one below detailing Green Foods plc's sales figures in Humberside. You want to emphasise the headings (in the top left three rows) and the columns containing the product names and the total sales.

In the spreadsheet program ('Spreadsheet' from the main menu) and with the spreadsheet loaded ('Load/Save', insert your data disc and give the name) while you're editing your spreadsheet press [PAGE]. You see 'Window 1' at the top. Pressing [PAGE] again takes you to other windows, up to 7 then back to the spreadsheet. [DOC] will leave the window and go straight back to the spreadsheet.

At the moment window 1 is empty. By pressing the cursors you can select a cell from the spreadsheet which is displayed on screen but nothing is in the window yet. You only see the cells to help you fix your position on the main spreadsheet.

What you're going to do is map out the columns you require, then the rows. For your first window you want columns A, B and H, and all the rows.

Use the cursors to go to cell A1. [F6] includes columns in the window, [F8] rows. So you press [F6] 'Include column', press [RETURN] in column A, cursor right, press [RETURN] for B, cursor over to H and press [RETURN] again, then finish with [SPACE]. At the moment you've got A, B and H selected at the bar across the top.

Now you can 'stretch' this one-line-deep rectangle downwards. Press [F8] and [RETURN] to select rows, cursoring downwards. The table of figures grows before you. [SPACE] finishes. You can be selective about the rows if you like: cursor past any you don't want.

Note that if you move between column B and H, the intermediate columns appear when you're going through them but don't stay on screen.

If you want to remove a column or row, press [CUT], then R or C to select row or column, then [RETURN]; when you move away it will disappear. You can edit cells as normal, and the amendments will affect the main spreadsheet (and vice versa). You can't wipe a window, you just have to delete all the rows and columns in it.

The merry window

Now if you print the spreadsheet as normal, except that on the print menu you select 'Window 1' instead of 'Windows off', the figures in the specified window come out in bold. If you like you can just print a window, though you have to select the window first from the 'Alter spreadsheet' menu ('Windows').

Now for the graphics data. A window saved as graphics data *must* have text as the top row and leftmost column of the window. Probably from this example you'd want to save a window with row 4 at the top and column 2 at the left.

So, put this in window 2 by pressing [PAGE] appropriately and map out a rectangle as above from

Product	Hull	Grinsby	Bev'ley	Scunthorpe	Ketwagh	TOTAL
Veg sausages	17.50	11.42	3.02	13.97	4.22	56.13
No-pork pies	28.85	27.03	11.64	9.11	3.08	79.71
Soya tripe	3.02	10.79	3.38	0.01	1.76	18.96
Nut trotters	4.44	7.79	3.38	5.05	0.92	21.48
TOTAL	59.61	57.18	33.82	34.14	9.98	194.73

PROFESSIONAL



Printout using Window 1 on

Hull Grimsby		Wetwang		TOTAL
17.50	11.42	4.22	56.13	
28.65	27.03	3.08	79.51	
9.02	10.94	1.76	37.61	
4.44	7.79	0.92	21.48	
59.61	57.18	9.98	194.73	

Green Foods plc		Product	TOTAL
001	Green Foods plc		
002	Sales 1988		
003	(£000s)		
004			
005			
006		Veg sausages	56.13
007		No-pork pies	79.51
008		Soya tripe	37.61
009		Nut trotters	21.48
010			
011		TOTAL	194.73

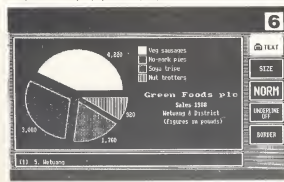
4 The window finished

5 The window for the graphics data

Free space: 327267	Auto-update	Window 2
Cell 6004	-Product/Product	
Contents: Product		

Product	Hull	Grimsby	Wetwang	Soya tripe	Nut trotters	TOTAL
Veg sausages	17.50	11.42	9.08	13.37	4.22	56.13
No-pork pies	28.65	27.03	11.64	9.11	3.08	79.51
Soya tripe	9.02	10.94	9.88	8.01	1.15	37.61
Nut trotters	4.44	7.73	3.28	5.05	0.92	21.48

6 Graphics data nicely displayed in a no-pork pie chart embellished with headings



columns B to G inclusive and rows 4, and 6 to 9 inclusive. You're missing out the blank lines (pointless and a nuisance when they turn up in the graphics program) and the totals (the graphics module does its own totals so they're superfluous).

Through 'Load/Save', take 'Save graphics data' and make sure the menu thereafter is switched to window 2 (or whichever you've put it in). You also have the choice of making the rows or columns the data sets. If you choose 'columns', each column will be regarded as a data set, meaning for example you could produce a pie chart for Hull or Beverley showing the relative sales of each product. If you choose 'rows' then you will save the data such that each product will have a graph, for example a pie chart for Soya Tripe showing the distribution of sales in each town.

[ENTER] changes options; when they're as you want, press S to 'continue' and save the data in graphics form.

The next screen lets you select the data sets you want to save. You probably want to save all of them (though you have a maximum of ten, so this won't be possible on big tables of figures) so press [ENTER] for each one you want in the graphics set and S when you've finished. The graphics data will be saved as a file ending .GRA.

Graphic jam

Leave the spreadsheet, saving the spreadsheet data first ('Load/Save', 'Save data') and then insert your Mini Office disc as prompted. Select the 'Graphics' program. When the graphics menu appears select 'Load/Save', insert your data disc again and specify the file you've just saved.

From now on it's plain sailing and downhill all the way. You treat your data set just like data you key in manually and produce pie charts, bar charts, line graphs and so on. Easy eh?

Full details on how to use the graphics module of Mini Office appeared in issue 22 of 8000 PLUS, July 88, page 16. Users of the graphics package will smile wryly at the word 'pounds' in the screen shot on these pages - Mini Office's graphics module will not let you put £ signs into any headings! ■

MINI OFFICE

Usual details

Mini Office is available from Database (0625 878888) for £29.95 or from mail order (such as our Special Offers pages). Sigma Press do a tutorial book on Mini Office called 'All in one Business Computing' by John Hughes for £11.95; details on 0625 531035.

Handy hint

Press [x] any time in Mini Office and letters will appear at the left of each item in each menu. Pressing that key has the same effect as moving down with the cursors to that item and pressing [ENTER]. For example W selects the word processor from the main menu, P selects 'Print' from most print menus and so on. Pressing [-] removes the letters from the screen though the trick works whether they're there or not.

The story so far...

This is the last of the tutorials on Mini Office. Next month to round off the series there'll be a compilation of tips and information missed

out from the manual, detailing procedures like exporting information from the spreadsheet, the database, the word processor and so on.

Covered previously:

Issue	Month	Subject
19	Apr 88	Database: setup, data entry, formulae
20	May 88	Database: sorting, selecting and printing
21	Jun 88	Mail merging
22	Jul 88	Graphics module: making graphs from data spreadsheets
23	Aug 88	Word processor: basic editing, printing out
24	Sep 88	Word processor: blocks, layouts, special features
25	Oct 88	Communications
26	Nov 88	Spreadsheet - what they're for, sp module
27	Dec 88	Spreadsheet - replicating, co constructing tables

One important amendment. In issue 21 we said that when you're constructing a letter for the mail merger, Mini Office isn't clever enough to close gaps, ie, if you leave a slot of five letters for the first name and ten for the surname, the name 'John Smith' would come out as John Smith and 'Bartholomew Smythe-Hamster' would come out as Barth Smythe-Hamster.

Bong! We didn't know that if you specify a length of zero for the incoming information in the mail merge letter, Mini Office will close up the gaps for you. Though a note to this effect now appears in the hastily added 'Mail merging' section of the manual on page 69, our version only went up to 68, so that's our excuse!

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WIRTH WAITING FOR

Is there a way to learn a new programming language easily? Pecan say yes; Steve Patient looks at PDQ Pascal

PDQ PASCAL

£29.95 • Pecan Systems (0272 425012)

• 8512s/9512s only

The immediate impression is that this is UCSD Pascal, a venerable implementation of the language (in slightly non standard form) popular in America for many years. The programs UCSD produces need a 'runtime module' to work – ie. if you wanted to sell a program you'd written, the users would need the runtime module on their disc to make it work. If you wanted to sell it with your program you'd have to negotiate a deal with the original suppliers. It's really halfway between a compiler and an interpreter.

The first thing to be discovered, and it isn't on the outside of the package, is that the system will only work with an 8512 or a 9512. This is because the whole lot is a single file occupying 300k on the disc. This is carrying integration a bit too far.

To get the system running it is necessary to type PDQ, VOI, which opens the 300K library file and brings up a command line at the top of the screen. From this the editor can be selected and, apparently, a number of other facilities.

Not only must you use the editor provided but your files remain locked up in the giant library file. PDQ Pascal provides no way to export your files from the library file to a separate file usable by another editor; the system is totally self contained.

Getting Wirth and Wirth

Once a file is created and saved to the library file it can be run. The program will, after being given several more names, execute and then deposit you back at the first menu. Programs also remain locked into the library file system and apparently cannot be used apart from it. This means that the PDQ system can only really be used to learn the Pascal language, not to make any practical use of it.

This sequence of events, edit and run, requires a large number of keystrokes and an almost constant churning of the disc drive as the system accesses the library file for its resources. The process involves a great deal of waiting.

Putting the library file in drive M speeds things up a little and cuts down the wear on the drive but leaves no room on M: for anything else. Also you must remember to copy the library file back to disc. It is essential to take backups when working with PDQ Pascal as a library file maintains its own directory within itself and any corruption there makes the file unusable. This weakness is not mentioned in the manual.

The convention adopted by PDQ Pascal for the naming of files is guaranteed to confuse anyone new to CP/M. Up to fifteen characters are allowed, for example,

VERY_LONG_TITLE, is acceptable. Text files are always given the filetype .TEXT, which is of course one character longer than CP/M permits. The editor will not recognise a file without this type.

Pecan nuts

In its original form UCSD Pascal proved a reliable and popular compiler though it must be remembered that there was little competition when it first appeared.

Pecan say you can upgrade to UCSD Pascal 'at a reasonable cost' – £119.54 inclusive of VAT Postage and

Pascal is often the first choice of a language to learn after BASIC. The structures are similar, pretty straightforward and it is quite hard to write incomprehensible code. Since Pascal code is virtually standardised it *should* be easy to take from one machine to another so that you're not restricted to the PCW.



How Pecan view Pascal



PASCAL



packing less the cost of PDQ Pascal.

On the plus side it has to be said that for a complete beginner unused to anything else PDQ Pascal would provide a reasonable training ground. The system is quirky but usable and the manual leads you through the elements of Pascal in easy stages. You would still need another book on Pascal for comparison and detailed descriptions of function usage.

On the minus side there is the fact that you can't use any other Pascal code you might come across, since you are unable to read in and modify existing programs to use under this system. The editor is a dog (the PDQ editor that is) and PDQ Pascal abuses CP/M rather, making the system very slow and unwieldy. The PDQ system is incompatible with everything else you might use on your computer.

What's in a name?

Pascal was designed by Niklaus Wirth to teach structured programming. It is named after Blaise Pascal, the mathematician. Pascal invented a mechanical adding machine earning him a mention in most accounts of the history of computing.

HiSoft v Pecan

Inevitably comparisons will be made with the HiSoft Pascal 80 compiler. This is a modern implementation of the language and comes with a full screen, configurable, program editor. Pascal 80 is a very fast compiler that produces stand alone .COM files, ie. you can give them away or sell them to your friends and they won't need anything extra to run them. When you hit an error, HiSoft's editor will automatically put you back into the editor at the line with the error.

Ease of programming is so closely tied in with the way the editor works that a co-operative editor must be an important consideration when buying a new language.

HiSoft's manual doesn't teach you Pascal – while it's an excellent guide to the package, you'll need a beginners' book if you've never used it before – but as a program development package it's more convenient, faster and more commercially viable.

PDQ PASCAL

PLUS

▲ Cheap

MINUTES

▼ 300k library file won't work on 8256.

▼ Quirky, confusing to use

▼ Self-contained – slow and you're stuck with the limitations

RANGE OF FEATURES
DOCUMENTATION

5

2

EASE OF USE
PERFORMANCE

2

2

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THE TAKEAWAY COMPUTER

Can portable computers change your way of life? Steve Patient looks at the current scene



Your PCW is no doubt a permanent feature of your study or bedroom now. But if you move around at all – staying at hotels, taking notes in libraries, working on trains, doing business on site – your PCW might have whetted your appetite for portable computing power.

Fifteen years or so ago a portable computer was one with wheels attached. Before you knew it there were computers that could be carried by a couple of strong men. In the last few years computer portability has finally become a practical proposition. But what are the benefits? What extra facilities does it offer over the PCW in your study or office?...

Many gurus of the computer industry believe that a truly portable, extremely friendly and powerful enough computer could fundamentally alter the way the majority of the population view their offerings.

If this happened then computers could go the way of video machines, telephones and calculators and become simply a tool that everyone has (or at least thinks they ought to have). To illustrate just what that could mean to manufacturers consider that Customs and Excise have given up counting video recorders and now measure them by the tonne!

There is still some way to go. Even in these days of million selling PCW machines there are still a lot of people who view computers of any kind with suspicion. Far from regarding them as useful tools difficult to do without they perceive them as intrusive and possibly dangerous devices. Only recently has television, for example, stopped portraying computers as rooms full of flashing lights and dials presided over by grinning maniacs in white coats.

For twenty years the electronics industry has been furiously competing to reduce both the size and the price of its products while simultaneously increasing the power. The fact is that people are never satisfied, whatever they've got they want more. In computing terms this means being able to make use of powerful programs that don't require too much learning, at any time, and any place.

For the computer manufacturers portable computing has become a kind of Holy Grail. Science fiction writers forecast that its time would come as long ago as the nineteen forties but the idea finally gained respectability with Alan Kay, a computer visionary employed by the Xerox corporation, who proposed the Dynabook concept in the early seventies, something the size of a paperback with the power of a desktop computer. But many different technologies had to come together to make his dream feasible.

Pulling up roots

In an ongoing attempt to satisfy the desire for a machine that will travel with you as lightly and unobtrusively as your shadow, and coincidentally reap the rewards of changing our basic perception of computers, the electronics industry is taking two slightly different approaches.

The first, and main thrust of their efforts, has been to try and squeeze everything that goes into a desktop computer into a portable machine. The early attempts at this were hampered by the lack of any display technology other than the TV style cathode ray tube. This resulted in machines that looked much like a portable sewing machine and weighed about the same.

These machines were always tied to the mains electricity supply because of the heavy power demands of CRT's and the large disc drives. With the coming of Liquid Crystal Displays (usually used for watches and calculators) these machines could suddenly be half the size and weight. Along with the smaller and less demanding 3.5" disc drives and low current microprocessors it finally became possible to throw away the mains lead.

Battery powered paper

The other philosophy followed by portable computer designers was to try and alter the very concept of a computer. Instead of working down from mainframes they worked up from a sheet of paper. The dream here is the 'Dynabook' concept – something as simple as a notebook but with greater functionality.

If you could buy a notebook that would understand the words you wrote on it, would do calculations written on it automatically, would remember times and dates, birthdays and meetings – and remind you of them; a notebook that would sort out data for reports, answer questions and even connect you to the electronic notebooks of your friends and associates so that you might treat the two books as one you shared in common – you might throw away your filofax and buy one.

It isn't hard to see how electronic paper could alter the way we live quite dramatically. For example, working on your desk at home you could be on anyone else's desk at the same time. A note to your library would place the book of your choice in your own notebook for reading. Ask a question and your notebook would research the answer for you automatically.

In many ways the electronic paper approach requires a considerably more powerful technology. To make power transparent to the user requires even more power. It is, however, a more elegant approach to the problem.

TOSHIBA T5100**£5055.00 • Toshiba Information Systems
(0932 785666)**

At the very top of the portable tree are the powerful MS-DOS machines – 'portable PCs'. Boasting the kind of facilities once restricted to a company mainframe the Toshiba T5100 portable must be in the top branches. Its 80386 micro-processor, 32 bit data path (cf. 8 on the PCW) and 32 address lines (16 on the PCW) mean it whips along at 16 megahertz (3.6 on the PCW) making it about 20 times faster than the PCW. On top of that it comes with 2 megabytes (2000k) of memory (512k on an 8512/9512). Even if you don't know what the figures mean, it still sounds impressive.

This dark grey portable comes with a 1.4 megabyte 3.5" floppy disc drive and a 40 megabyte hard disc. The whole thing is built to the size and weight of an attaché case (about 15 lbs). The lid opens up to reveal the keyboard and screen, and the screen is itself beautiful to look at.

It has a gas plasma display which consists of two layers of glass with a thin gas in between. Tiny wires on the inside of the glass can be electrified. When one going up on one side is charged and one going across on the other side is likewise charged the gas at the point where they pass glows like a tiny orange neon bulb.

The display is rock steady (since the wires can't move) and doesn't flicker at all. The only drawback is that since it is actually viewed by emitted light – and there isn't enough – very bright ambient light can wash out the display. No good for a sunny beach, but you wouldn't want to risk getting sand in the works anyway.

Part of the (non-financial) price you pay for a machine as powerful as this is that it must have a mains power supply for the fan, the hard disk and the current-hungry memory.

This isn't as much of a problem as it sounds since the kind of person who buys one of these is unlikely to be working in a field, there wouldn't be anyone there to see their pride and joy.

This means business

So why would you consider buying a machine with the kind of power this one has? Where does it fit in? In some ways it really is a desktop machine since it needs a mains supply. The keyboard is a bit on the narrow side – less than 12" wide – and fitting all the keys required by MS-DOS software into this amount of space requires a lot of compromises. So many in fact that if you are familiar with the standard 102 key layout this will give you problems. In some ways it would be better to use this machine all the time to avoid the constant irritation of trying to remember where the various key functions are.

For an engineer, or an architect making heavy use of CAD (Computer Aided Design) packages a machine with the power of the T5100 makes sense. Since the T5100

has the power supply built in there is no more to do than pull the lead out from the back, coil it up and stick it in your case. The hard disc looks after itself (they normally need a special parking routine), the machine can now be folded up and is ready to go in about twenty seconds – setting it up again is just as fast – if you do have to take it all around at short notice this is very convenient.

In practice a computer as powerful as this represents a kind of overkill and tends to be bought as a status symbol for top executives, to go with the Jaguar car and the Pierre Cardin watch. Being seen with a something like the T5100 says something about you.

The list price is a hefty £4,395 plus VAT. A model for the machine is another £350. For that money you can buy ten or more PCW 8256's and simply leave them everywhere you go. Then all you'd have to carry around would be a single disc, surely the ultimate in portability? This is the machine for the executive who has everything and will look good alongside the hand tooled Filofax. A machine to drool over but don't leave it lying around in your car.

AMSTRAD PPC**£458.85-£746.35 • Amstrad plc (0277 228888)**

Amstrad came into the portable market with an unusual and aggressively priced offering. Unlike most other portables in the MS-DOS market which

Palm of your hand

Atan are launching a Pocket PC 'in January' designed by British company DIP, formed by two ex-employees of Psion. The machine will use Credit-card sized 'discs' and weigh under 1lb. Psion themselves are rumoured to be working on something similar

**What about my PCW?**

How well can your portable and your PCW work together? LocoScript only works on the PCW; not on the PC (just now, anyway...). This means you'll have to use another word processor – Protext, even WordStar, perhaps – if you want to work on the same files on both machines.

You'll certainly have to buy connecting cables and probably special software to pipe stuff from one to the other – your dealer will advise on the type for the portable you're

interested in. Few, if any, PCW programs work on other machines: Masterfile, WordStar, SuperCalc 2, Protext come to mind but that's about it. Basically only simple text ASCII and data files can move between the two. You certainly can't expect any PPC programs to work on your PCW or vice versa for example.

Buying a new computer is often only half the expense – you'll end up getting more software, connecting cables, interfaces, an extra printer...



Psion by me

PSION ORGANISER

£114.50 • Psion (01-723 9408)
The Psion organiser is a hand held computer rather than a portable (a distinction made by marketing departments) intended for people who do not type and therefore don't care about keyboards. The display area is 2 lines by 16 columns so you need to know your way around your own files. Weighing in at 250 gms (about 0.5 lbs) you are unlikely to find a more portable computer than this.

The Psion organiser comes in 2 models, the CM and the XP. The main difference is that the CM has only 8k of memory built in and the XP has 32k. The XP can also accept 128k datapaks and 32k rampaks. The CM will only accept 64k datapaks.

There is a powerful programming language built in, OPL, or you can run a variety of applications from a datapak. There is an RS232 interface to allow connection to other computers or to a modem. Bar code readers and magnetic card readers are also available. These give some clue as to the Psion market - retailing and stock control.

Because of the sheer convenience of the Psion organiser - it will literally go in your pocket - the shortcomings of the display and keyboard tend to be discounted. The fact that the basic model costs only £99.50 means that a company can practically write it off to petty cash. It also means that someone wanting to get into portable computing but who has already blown the budget on a PCW might

just be able to persuade themselves that buying a Psion organiser is a feasible way to proceed. If you're on a tight budget, don't want to carry anything too obviously a portable computer and are mainly concerned with control applications or data handling then this is an ideal buy.



Mighty atom

Second hand portables

In the pages of the computer press you will often see advertisements for portable CPM machines. The size and weight of sewing machines they can be very good value. Usually with two disc drives and an 80 by 25 screen and around the £200 mark. Best moved by car

tend to be a small keyboard with screen that folds over it, the PPC is a full size keyboard that folds over the rest of the machine.

The PPC is basically the same technology as the PC 1512 and like most other portables can accept an external monitor. This is quite important with the PPC as the LCD screen fitted to the machine, though good of its kind, is tiring to work with for any extended period of time.

It uses mains power where available but can run from a car cigarette lighter socket (it had to be there for something) an existing Amstrad PC monitor as supplied with the PC 1512 and PC 1640 or from its own internal batteries.

The PPC comes with a minimum 512k of memory and one 720k disc drive. The top of the range machine has two 720k disc drives 640k of ram and a modem with V21, V23 and V22 standards built in. It also comes with the Organiser software. Weighing in at just over 12lbs its actually lighter than the T1500.

Board with keys

So who does a PPC suit? The machine is not expandable internally although a hard disc drive is now available. The market Amstrad are aiming at is anyone who doesn't have the money for a Toshiba. The ideal customer is someone who already uses a PC either at work or at home and needs a fully compatible machine for use elsewhere, in fact it is seen as a possible second machine for existing users of MS-DOS machines.

The PPC seems to appeal to PCW owners quite strongly despite the fact that they have to buy new software. CP/M

programs and LocoScript simply won't work on the MS-DOS machines. Of course users of programs such as SuperCalc, Protext, Masterfile and many others will find versions in the PC world with a similar feel and compatible data files.

The PPC will run any IBM compatible software that doesn't require a hard disc. This lets out a few of the heavyweight drawing packages but not much else. Since the keyboard is standard there are no new habits to learn in going from one machine to another and this is a big advantage for anyone who is actually keyboard literate. If you currently use software that makes a lot of use of control keys or the numeric keypad, or indeed any keys other than the QWERTY part of the board then changing keyboards will cripple your productivity.

None of this applies to the PCW owner who, having learnt one quirky QWERTY shouldn't have too much trouble with another.

One of the areas in which portables excel is the provision of modems. Portable manufacturers have to assume that those buying their products aren't going to be staying in one place (or they wouldn't need a portable) and that therefore communications are important. The PPC 640 series actually includes a very powerful modem as standard, which many more expensive machines fail to do, and at the price would be worth buying for the quality of modem alone. Some industry observers have gone so far as to call it a modem with a computer attached.

The PPC certainly won't look as good on the seat next to you on Concorde, on the other hand it is pleasant enough to actually work on and with a monitor attached for extended use can easily replace a traditional desktop machine. Where it wins without any trouble at all is in the pricing. A PPC can be bought without taking out a second mortgage; they range from the single drive PPC 512 to the PPC 640 which includes the modem. At the price the 640 machines with the modem is unbeatable and Amstrad are going to be selling them for a long time.

TANDY 102

£343.85 • Radio Shack/Tandy (0922 710000)

The Tandy 102 is in many ways the granddaddy of portable computing. In the guise of the Tandy 100 it has been around for years. Designed as a general purpose portable computer it found its niche in journalism. This was largely because of the excellent keyboard Tandy built into their machine.

The display is only 40 characters wide by 8 deep and can display graphics, not just letters. Naturally the amount of text that can be seen at any one time is limited but for



Tiny Tandy, the journalist's friend



is a new product for the PCW8256 and PCW8512

It is designed to enable anyone to examine, copy and recover information from damaged or corrupted discs. Although ToolKit is a full-function disc editor, you don't need to be an expert to use it! The manual too is comprehensive but straightforward, and includes features such as a "First Aid" section for quick answers in an emergency.

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Pocket power

You've been staring into the windows of your favourite computer dealer and lusting after the latest in portable computers and promising yourself one for Christmas, but is it all singing, all dancing portable that you are actually needing? (as distinct from what you want).

There are those who really do need to compute on the move, and for them their portable computer has to be an extension of their desktop machine. This applies to those whose time is so expensive that they aren't allowed to waste it relaxing on the train; journalists, for example.

But if you don't work with text spreadsheets and databases, if your real need is number crunching, or statistical analysis then you don't need a computer capable of processing words at all. Instead you need a glorified calculator; and the fact is that some of the current generation of calculators are pretty glorious.

Most of them come with a built in programming language (usually a version of BASIC), a whole host of scientific,

mathematical, statistical or financial functions and internal storage up to about 8K. This makes them more powerful than many of the early home machines.

This breed of supercalculator really is pocket sized and yet some of them still manage to offer a complete qwerty keypad, a numeric keypad as well as various dedicated function keys. Some of them go further and provide an LCD screen that can display graphics as well as alphanumeric characters allowing you to display the results of calculations in visual form.

This type of calculator can be found for as little as £50 although the best of them are closer to £100. The more expensive versions can usually be interfaced to some form of external storage or printer. For the engineer or scientist (not to mention the radio amateur or electronics enthusiast) this form of portable computing is probably a better buy. You gain instant access to those calculating facilities that would normally require a special program to be run on a general purpose computer.



Latest and greatest?

You know all about the Z88 from Cambridge from the current series in 8000 Plus. Probably the nearest anyone has come to the 'electronic paper' concept so far. But at £299 for the basic machine is it cheap enough, reliable enough and useful enough to become everyone's second computer?

Sir Clive Sinclair obviously thinks so but his track record in marketing is slightly suspect (vide the ill-fated C5 car...). The Z88 is a fairly powerful machine but quirky in its approach to text handling and interfacing. It is also far too expensive. It hasn't the Tandy's ruggedness or excellent keyboard nor the huge service organisation and reputation of

the Tandy company you would expect for this price.

The Z88 is the lightest programmable computer (just over 2lbs) with a full size keyboard on the market and the display, though a compromise between legibility and window size, is better than that of most LCD screens. This is a tribute to Phillips technology rather than Cambridge, though, and you can expect more of these displays to appear on other machines. Like the Tandy this is a machine to use as a peripheral to your main computer. Time will tell if Cambridge have got it right for the mass market.

Portable Amstrad PCW

£405 - £625 • Isensteln 0224 312986

Naturally enough a lot of PCW owners would not use a portable machine simply because it isn't a PCW. For them Isensteln have the answer. Their Odessa (reviewed in the Nov 1988 issue) is a complete PCW in a portable box.

It weighs in at 12lb, comes with a standard 8256 keyboard and can be had in single or double drive version with or without a printer. At last, true compatibility available by order.



note taking or data input this isn't really a problem. The characters are large enough to be easily read which is an important consideration with LCD screens. When the machine first appeared it wasn't a problem at all since there really wasn't anything else to compare it with.

The Tandy 102 comes with 32k of ROM (inbuilt software) and 24k of memory, a printer port, RS232C serial port, cassette interface and a phone socket. The internal autodial modem is included in the price but is a bit slow by current standards (V21 which is 300/300 baud).

Built in software includes Text, Telecom, Address, Schedule, and BASIC. These are a simple word processor, a flat file database, a diary/tickler file and an implementation of Microsoft BASIC respectively.

The whole device weighs only 3.9 lbs, is very easy to use and the large LCD display makes the text extremely easy to read. Upgrades will take the memory up to 32k (sic) and are available for £24.95. There is also a small 100k disc drive available, a bar code reader and a mains adaptor. The internal Nickel-Cadmium rechargeable batteries will keep the contents of memory intact for up to thirty days with the machine turned off thus giving you time to be rescued from Brent without losing your account of the hardships you suffered there.

Spreading the word

If you plan to go studying penguins in Tierra del Fuego, or travelling extensively in the Kalahari, then your main concern has to be reliability. If anything goes down there aren't likely to be spares at hand. In those circumstances the Tandy 102 has to be a good buy.

By current technical standards the technology is practically stone-age, but then some pundits have said the same about the PCW machines. It must be admitted that there are fundamental limits to the kind of work you would do on the Tandy 102, for instance moving large amounts of text around or performing number intensive calculations could prove slow.

Since the Tandy 102 is reasonably cheap it isn't too outrageous to treat it as a detachable peripheral for your PCW. In fact since the Tandy 102 is really an embodiment of the second approach to portable computers, electronic notepaper, this is the ideal way to regard it. There is an upmarket version of this machine called the Tandy 200 which can just about be regarded as a stand alone portable computer. It boasts a 40 column by 16 line display and a small (184k) built in disc drive. The internal memory can be expanded to 72k and a monitor can be attached to give an 80 by 25 line display. Weighing just 4.5lbs it's a nice machine but at £595 + VAT is a bit on the expensive side compared to the PPC range. A tried and trusted computer with an excellent pedigree. If you need to travel light and compute on the move without worry this is the machine to choose. Worth having a more powerful machine to come home to. ■

New PCW software from ARNOR

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CORRUPTION

£24.95 ● Rainbird (01-240 8838) ● All PCs



The nearest most of us get to high finance is playing Monopoly, perhaps the only game in the world where you can acquire unhealthy amounts of money yet still have trouble paying the milkman. In Corruption you find yourself in a similar position. You might enjoy playing a game in which the air screams money but it won't ultimately do

anything about the holes in your pockets.

The game takes you into the heady world of stocks and shares where making money, whether by hook or by crook, is what it's all about. Not that you're corrupt or anything like that, just that there's something rotten in the state of Scott Electronics and it's up to you to find out what it is.

You begin the game with the apparently good news that you have been made a partner in the company and rewarded with a company car for your previous, and totally honest, endeavours. After all, you've kept your department healthily in the black. Still, it seems strange that your office is as bad as the last one... and why is there no phone?

It doesn't take you long to realise that something highly dubious is going on. Insider dealing perhaps? Why else would the Serious Fraud Squad be trying to get in touch with your partner? Not that he seems very worried.

Opposite Scott Electronics lies the park which is less easy to get to than it would appear. Like any road in London, to get across it you must have either very long legs or be able to fly. In Corruption, therefore, crossing the road could be one of the more reliable forms of suicide. On the other hand, it might provide a speedy route to the hospital, another of the game's many locations, where sedation has a permanency about it that is best avoided.

Pic'n'mix

Corruption contains a series of excellent graphics which, as usual in Magnetic Scrolls' adventures, can be viewed in 'dither' or 'stipple' mode. The text is very well written and irreverently comic in tone. I particularly liked the poetic 'The sink against the north wall gurgles at inopportune moments in time with the urinal' which, as students of poetics will be aware, is redolent of Shelley at his best.

The game's interaction is particularly good as you can have a variety of fruitful 'conversations' and expect sensible replies. One of the more interesting commands is the one that enables you to specify the amount of time you want to wait, whereas the FOLLOW command means that you can keep a careful watch over what the other characters are up to.

The playguide accompanying the game is exceptionally full, providing a range of information that a stockbroker might be expected to carry – useful addresses, a day planner, a map and various notes on expenses. There is also a 'Timeoff Infotax Guide to Business Entertaining', for those for whom business and pleasure are synonymous.

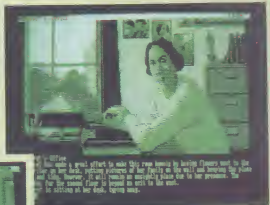
Corruption is an excellent adventure game and should particularly appeal to yuppies, whizzkids and other types of obnoxiously rich people. Whether they will find time to play it is a different matter. Still, there's plenty of other people around for whom time, thankfully, is not money. ■

GAMING SEASON

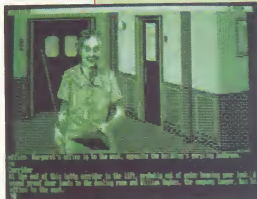
Incorruptible man of fair play
Tony Flanagan looks at Rainbird's new
game set in the City.

Unfair shares

Your secretary appears less than friendly, if not downright hostile, and totally oblivious to your usually impressive pin-stripes. Your partner's secretary, on the other hand, though empty-headed, is very attractive and their relationship clearly brings a new meaning to the word stenography. He drives a Porsche while you drive a BMW, which all goes to show that in stocks and shares land, all have equity, but some have more equity than others.

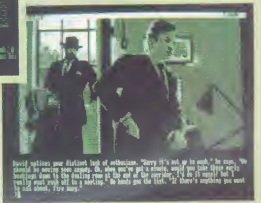


Initially, you explore the two-storey building which houses Scott Electronics. Curiously, the bathroom seems to attract a range of dubious activities. Why, for example, does Rogers make frequent trips there? Is it to dispose of some highly sensitive information or does he simply have trouble with his prostate?



Before long you realise that you're being set up, that your partner and his collaborators are out to incriminate you for their corrupt activities.

Consequently, the way to succeed at this game (and avoid arrest) is to investigate as discreetly as possible, trying not to upset anyone along the way.



CORRUPTION PLUS

- ▲ Impressive graphics
- ▲ Game creates tension: will you find out about them before they get you?
- ▲ Excellent playguide: cypherie hints section

MINUSES

- ▼ It's hard being honest

ATMOSPHERE CHALLENGE

4/5
4/5

INTERACTION VALUE VERDICT

5/5
5/5



The Tomahawk screen simulates the view from the Apache's cockpit. In the upper half of the screen is the world outside, a bleak landscape where everything is made of old coat hangers and the mountains look like discarded models from Open University mathematics broadcasts. The lower half of the screen are a bewildering collection of dials, scales and monitors – you have to read through the manual very carefully to make sense of it all.

TOMAHAWK

£19.95 • Digital Integration (0276 684959)

• All PCWs

Tomahawk has been around for nearly three years now – almost as long as the PCW itself. Now, however, it works on the 9512 – at last some software companies are beginning to recognise that the newer PCW is not just a smart typewriter for small businesses; it can also be a machine for closet psychos to act out their weird fantasies and pretend to pilot an Apache helicopter shooting things down. Doubtless when some unhinged PCW owner actually does run amok with a real Apache, blasting innocent passing hot-air balloonists out of the sky, flight simulators will be held to blame.

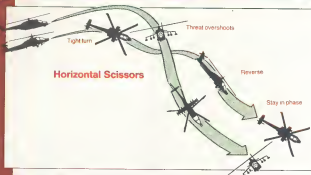
Piloting a chopper isn't just a case of first gear, ease off the clutch and accelerate away – you have to keep tabs on your torque, the angle of your rotor blades, your altitude, your forward speed, your vertical speed, your pitch, roll and yaw, your fuel and so on. No doubt the amount of mustard in your sandwiches is critical too and a smidgen too much of the Coarse Ground will send your Apache into a fatal dive. All this and enemy craft to intercept and shoot down too.

Tomahawk is a very good program and hasn't dated in its three year lifespan. The 9512 version will introduce a side of the PCW they never knew existed to a lot of people. If you've only ever used LocoScript and dabbled with type-in lists it'll be a new experience. ■



...and Rob Ainsley checks out two repackaged goodies for the New Year

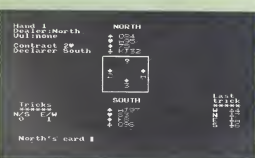
Tomahawk is a very good program and hasn't dated in its three year lifespan. The 9512 version will introduce a side of the PCW they never knew existed to a lot of people. If you've only ever used LocoScript and dabbled with type-in lists it'll be a new experience. ■



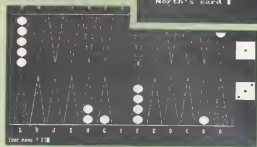
The Chess program particularly plays a very good club standard, and while the ferocious strength of its opening book isn't quite matched by the wisdom of its endgame – as with all Chess computer programs – it's still a good challenge for any Chess fan. You have a three dimensional view of a Chess board and move either by cursors plus [ENTER] or by typing in your moves algebraically. A clock records the time taken by you and the PCW and cheats mercilessly on recording its own times! You can set the aggression of the program, and play Kningspel, blindfold and beginner modes. The board view is similar to that on Clock Chess and you enter moves by typing the squares to move from and to. There are no exotic options as the Chess program offers but for draughts devotees this is another good implementation.

Draughts, being a simple game, is almost impossible to win when you're playing against a computer. The board view is similar to that on Clock Chess and you enter moves by typing the squares to move from and to. There are no exotic options as the Chess program offers but for draughts devotees this is another good implementation.

The Bridge section of the package Bridge Player 2000, offers Blackwood and Stayman conventions and a number of features making it good for a beginner – example hands, post mortems of games with explanatory text detailing each opponent's moves and so on. You can robot or replay the last game; a dangerous option tempting you to play that last hand in every way imaginable until it really is time to go to bed.



Backgammon gives you a simple plan view of the board. As it's a mixture of skill and luck you have to trust the machine hasn't cheated when it throws itself out of trouble with a double six. The program isn't adventurous but for backgammon fans this is the only implementation of the game on the PCW and thankfully a good one.



CLASSIC GAMES

£19.95 • CP Software (0993 823463)

• All PCWs

Adventures and enemy-blatting games are not everybody's cup of strength-restoring potion. After all, PCW owners are a thoughtful bunch and many are unimpressed by make-believe worlds of castles, kings and queens; nor do they enjoy gratuitous and systematic annihilation of enemy forces. No, your average PCW owner prefers a thinking game like Chess – still plenty of castles, kings, queens and enemy forces annihilated, but at least it makes you sound clever and mature.

The idea behind Classic Games is a bit like those compilations from K-Tel and Ronco: pack a load of tried and tested hits on one disc and sell it at normal price. On this disc are CP Software's best selling 'thinking' games – Clock Chess '88, Bridge Player, Backgammon and Draughts.

All have been reviewed in these pages before and all perform well. Classic Games is an excellent value for money package and would be great for any PCW owner, whether compulsive player of, or dabbler in, any of the games. ■



TOMAHAWK

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 4/5

CLASSIC GAMES

3000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 5/5

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BOOK LOOK

Sharon Bradley gets the picture and spreads it around:
New books on DTP and SuperCalc

DESKTOP PUBLISHING ON A SHOESTRING

by Ian Sinclair

£9.95 ● Blackwell Scientific (0865 240201)

The 103rd Sinclair book (yes, one hundred and third) attempts to raise the reputation of low-cost desktop publishing. Many home computer operators use DTP programs to enhance their printed output but don't generally have the kind of funding that a fully-fledged publisher enjoys. This book was written for their benefit.

Sinclair has chosen Mirrorsoft's Fleet Street Editor as his example software because it's the only DTP program available (in slightly modified forms) for all the machines to which this book is applicable. It's also, says Sinclair, inexpensive, and a program from which you can obtain relatively ambitious effects without too much difficulty. He neglects to mention any of Fleet Street's notorious bugs, which are not confined to the PCW version.

There's a wealth of genuine, well-captioned pictures to accompany the text at all times and he also covers some of the most common snags you're likely to encounter: hyphenating long words in narrow columns, for example, to stop them automatically being sent down to the next line and thus creating gaps, and importing word-processed text. Artwork, you are advised, is also only effective when used in a restrained way. He describes the process of superimposing graphics on text as 'delightfully simple' with Fleet Street Editor. He then goes on to show how images can be turned over, merged, and inverted.

In the final chapter, Sinclair points out that the reader should, by now, be equipped to undertake any kind of DTP work using Fleet Street Editor. This is precisely the problem: whilst much of the general advice he gives is sound regardless of software, the majority of the book's content is relevant solely to users of Fleet Street Editor. In an attempt to correct some of the most common grammatical cockups to appear in DTP output, the author contemplates, at length, the role of the apostrophe and object pronoun in the English language. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear to be either the time or the place, and all he does is scratch the surface of the iceberg anyway.

Having said that, the book is an excellent read for devoted Fleet Street users and covers in detail many aspects that are cursorily dismissed in the manual. A good buy for anyone desktop publishing on a shoestring. ■

DESKTOP PUBLISHING ON A SHOESTRING

ISBN 0 632 02495

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 3/5

THE SUPERCALC SUPER BOOK

by Elizabeth H Lee

£12.95 ● Sigma Press (0625 531035)

This book shows you how to get the best out of the SuperCalc family of spreadsheets. Each of the three programs (SuperCalc 2, 3 and 4) has its own slice of the market to satisfy: SuperCalc 2 (the only one available for the PCW) is ideal for small businesses requiring a classic spreadsheet without complicated maths or automation. SuperCalc 3 is better suited to medium-sized businesses needing automatic financial calculations and graphs, while SuperCalc 4, hailed as the programmer's program, has heaps more of everything.

The book devotes quite a lot of time to SuperCalc's more sophisticated features. Lee also shows how a number of pre-written formulae and macros (single computer

commands that replace a whole series of instructions) can be pre-programmed into SuperCalc and later categorized into specific applications: SuperCalc 2 has 38 formulae alone, while SuperCalc 3 and 4 have 51 and 92 respectively.

Ample time is devoted to the practicalities of SuperCalc: coaxing the best in the way of illustrative material out of 3 and 4 in the form of graphs, for example – whether they be bar, stacked bar, double bar, Hi Lo, pie or area graphs. Chapter 11, on the other hand, deals with the tricky problem of printing out spreadsheets – though it's doubtful SuperCalc 2 users will find much help there.

As is often the case, the appendices at the end of the book make for interesting and useful reading. Appendix 1, for example, consists of four and a half pages of commonly

encountered 'How do I...?' type problems and explains what commands you need to use to carry out certain tasks.

The SuperCalc Super Book is a very thorough look at this particular family of spreadsheets. Unfortunately, it will be of limited relevance to PCW owners unless they also possess other larger machines; SuperCalc 2 is the only member of the family to run on the CP/M operating system, and you may well find that your specific questions (like how to print out in italic NLQ etc) are unanswered. Still, the text is accompanied by frequent, well-explained illustrations and amusing little cartoons so as to make the SuperCalc Super Book a lively and informative read. ■

THE SUPERCALC SUPERBOOK

ISBN 1 85058 080 4

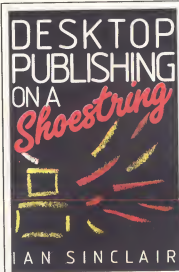
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 4/5

Street life

Fleet Street Editor exists in versions for the BBC Micro, the Amstrad CPC 6128, and also for IBM PC and clone compatibles. Other versions have different names, the PCW version is called Editor Plus and the considerably enhanced version for the Atari ST is called Fleet Street Publisher.

Slip yourself a disc

For less than six pounds (the exact price depends on the format) you can buy the accompanying SuperDisc which contains the 18 spreadsheets used as illustrations throughout the book. Most of them, however, will only run on SuperCalc 4.



MINI OFFICE WALLCHART

Common to all programs is the Disc Utilities menu. The list of files on the current disc, accessed through the Catalogue disc, Erase file and Rename file options, is the equivalent of the Disc Management Screen in LocoScript.

The Disc Utilities menu:

Catalogue disc

Year	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100																			
Population	1,000,000	1,050,000	1,100,000	1,150,000	1,200,000	1,250,000	1,300,000	1,350,000	1,400,000	1,450,000	1,500,000	1,550,000	1,600,000	1,650,000	1,700,000	1,750,000	1,800,000	1,850,000	1,900,000	1,950,000	2,000,000	2,050,000	2,100,000	2,150,000	2,200,000	2,250,000	2,300,000	2,350,000	2,400,000	2,450,000	2,500,000	2,550,000	2,600,000	2,650,000	2,700,000	2,750,000	2,800,000	2,850,000	2,900,000	2,950,000	3,000,000	3,050,000	3,100,000	3,150,000	3,200,000	3,250,000	3,300,000	3,350,000	3,400,000	3,450,000	3,500,000	3,550,000	3,600,000	3,650,000	3,700,000	3,750,000	3,800,000	3,850,000	3,900,000	3,950,000	4,000,000	4,050,000	4,100,000	4,150,000	4,200,000	4,250,000	4,300,000	4,350,000	4,400,000	4,450,000	4,500,000	4,550,000	4,600,000	4,650,000	4,700,000	4,750,000	4,800,000	4,850,000	4,900,000	4,950,000	5,000,000	5,050,000	5,100,000	5,150,000	5,200,000	5,250,000	5,300,000	5,350,000	5,400,000	5,450,000	5,500,000	5,550,000	5,600,000	5,650,000	5,700,000	5,750,000	5,800,000	5,850,000	5,900,000	5,950,000	6,000,000	6,050,000	6,100,000	6,150,000	6,200,000	6,250,000	6,300,000	6,350,000	6,400,000	6,450,000	6,500,000	6,550,000	6,600,000	6,650,000	6,700,000	6,750,000	6,800,000	6,850,000	6,900,000	6,950,000	7,000,000	7,050,000	7,100,000	7,150,000	7,200,000	7,250,000	7,300,000	7,350,000	7,400,000	7,450,000	7,500,000	7,550,000	7,600,000	7,650,000	7,700,000	7,750,000	7,800,000	7,850,000	7,900,000	7,950,000	8,000,000	8,050,000	8,100,000	8,150,000	8,200,000	8,250,000	8,300,000	8,350,000	8,400,000	8,450,000	8,500,000	8,550,000	8,600,000	8,650,000	8,700,000	8,750,000	8,800,000	8,850,000	8,900,000	8,950,000	9,000,000	9,050,000	9,100,000	9,150,000	9,200,000	9,250,000	9,300,000	9,350,000	9,400,000	9,450,000

Selections for all menus are made either by

- a) working up and down the menu with the cursor keys and then hitting the [RETURN] key or
b) by typing in [W] for word processor, [D] for database, and so on. These short cut keypresses can be displayed on the screen by pressing the [+] key (beside the space bar) and cleared with the [-] key.

The Mini Office Main Menu:

Word processor prom

Database
Specialist
Grants
Communications
Contractors
Call to CM

To bypass the main menu, at the CP/M A> prompt, type in either **WORLD** or **DBASE**. Make sure you've got the right disc in the drive though.

The Word Processor Menu:

Word Processor menu

Edit document

Special Agent in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C.

This wallchart is a guide to the menus and options in the word processor and database section of Mini Office Professional.

On this page are the menus of the word processor module with a few reminders of each option in each menu.

Overleaf are the menus from the database section of the package. If you hang the chart up this way, you can fold up the database section when you need it without having to remove the chart from the wall.

Embedded commands.

Embedded commands are instructions to the printer typed in along with the text. They are shown on screen as dim characters but only their effect is evident on final print out. (SHIFT)ALT(U); turns on underlining at the first character following the insertion of the code which appears as a dim

[ALT] [U] turns, underlining off and appears as a dim U.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]]: turns bold on and is shown by a dim B.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] turns off.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] turns on italic and [ALT][T] turns it off.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] turns on the inverse video option and [ALT][T] turns it off again.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] turns on superscript and [ALT][T] turns on subscript. Turn either off with [ALT][O].
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] changes the character set to elite and [ALT][T] turns it off.
[SHIF[T][ALT][T]] switches to the condensed character set.

The Database Menu:

Database

Local database Veeva database Assign strings

The Assign Strings screen:

Going Loco

Mini Office documents from the word processor can be used directly in LocoScript. Just open up a new Loco document on the same disc and insert text' ([F1] Loco 2, [F2] Loco 1) then remove the cursor over the Mini Office document. Press [ENTER] and the text from it is inserted into the Loco document. you lose any layouts, tabs, bold and italic commands and so on and have to delete a few spurious characters from the top but otherwise it should be OK.

To use a LocoScript document in Mini Office, make an ASCII file of it first ([F1] Loco 2, [F7] Loco 1) in the disc manager. Then run up Mini Office and load the file directly.

Using the database

The word processor creates files in its own format, but can read files from the database as 'merge' files which have the suffix .MRG. This is used for mailshots, for example, to names and addresses stored in the database.

Select View Database to insert the first record into the specified format.

The Load/Save option:

Load/Save

Load document
Save document
Load all
Save all
Load/Save set up
Merge document
Save block ...
Save Ascii
Save prompt ...
Exit

There are three types of file associated with the word processor: DOC files are ordinary word processed documents; PRX files contain printer set-up details and DBS files with database set-up particulars. The Load/Save Set Up option:

Load/Save set up

Load set up

[illegible]

lets you save or load either one or both of the last two types of

其 中 最 大 的 一 个 是 在 2000 年 1 月 1 日 实 施 的 新 个 人 所 得 税 法 中 的 有 关 规 定。

Number Type String c

lets you save or load either one or both of the last two types of files according to the specifications already decided on. The other options are concerned exclusively with text document file

The Edit screen:

[illegible]

Dear Sir,
I have just enclosed a copy of last year's accounts. I must also remind you that your subscription is due and prompt settlement would be much appreciated. I hope it will continue into the new year.
Thankyou for your support. I hope it will continue into the new year.
Yours sincerely,
T. B. Gledhill.

This is where you start creating your document. All the text will appear between the dim **START** and **END** markers. Pressing [F1] accepts the 'automatic save while editing' option. Press [RETURN] at the Save menu and [EXIT] to get back into the document.

The Search and Replace Menu:

- Edit document
- Search and replace
- Database
- Clear document
- Load/Save
- Misc utilities
- Print
- Office main menu

Enter replace string

tomorrow -

Make sure the cursor is at the beginning of your document. It will automatically be there if you load it without editing it. Enter the search string followed by the replacing text string and press **RETURN**.

Field Contents

1 32 New Street
2 West Hanbourne
3 Otway
4 Herts.
5 Mr J. Smith
6

Page format

Page length 66

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100	100
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151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200	200

The Default Settings Menu:

Default settings

Line spacing ... Single

Barcode	978-0-13-061092-1
Page no.	300
Page no.	300
Print quality	High
Printer type	Laser
Output time	3 sec
Print value	\$2
Total	\$2

In default settings, standard values are easily altered by toggling and cycling through options. For example, the page number type can be Normal, Decimal, Lower Roman or Upper Roman.

MARKETING PROGRAM

Part two
of the series on
writing and selling
programs: Steve Patient
considers selling the goods

You have a wonderful, original and simple idea for a new software package, an ace game, or even a LocoScript utility, but then what? Before anything else you need to decide whether or not the idea really is as good as it seems. This is Market Research and will give you some idea of just how saleable your proposed product is, and remember, once you start trying to sell your idea it is exactly that, another product vying for space in the market.

You may be able to judge demand fairly accurately if you have plenty of previous experience in either selling software or in the field the product is aimed at but that doesn't always apply. A better approach is to read the advertisements in the relevant publications and see how many are competing in the same market. Perusing the shelves of retailers likely to be interested in servicing the market you are aiming at is also a worthwhile activity.

A big, busy, market always has room for one more product (houses, for example) whereas in a smaller, more specialist sphere (say LocoScript guides) your product will have to be much better than those already there if it hopes to make an impression.

If the mousetrap your prospective customers already have catches mice you need to think how they can be persuaded to switch to yours, and remember, unlike mousetraps, software doesn't wear out. Of course, your product may be so innovative that it actually creates a new market (VisiCalc, which appeared a decade ago, virtually created the spreadsheet concept and consequently a new market).

With a specialist product it might be necessary to mailshot possible customers to find out if they're interested. This can take a great deal of time in research and a lot of money in postage but it could be cheaper than moving into production blind and selling nothing.

Going in at the deep end

If the results of your market research seem encouraging and you're a programmer the next step is to write the program, if not then you must get it written. Let's assume that part of the creative process is successful and you've now got the program sitting on the desk in front of you, working and debugged.

Now you've decided to actually try and enter the market but you still have another major decision to make before you can sell anything. Will you sell to your customers directly by mail order or through distributors? Sometimes you can do both but generally this means a bigger organisation and therefore larger startup costs.

This is an important decision and affects everything else you do. To put it at its simplest a distributor gives you immediate access to perhaps several hundred retail outlets each presumably packed to the gunwales with dedicated salesmen who will thrust your product into the eager waiting hands of everyone who needs it. You gain the salesforce, the credibility of a dedicated retail outlet and shelf space. In some ways these advantages are above price. If your product is a game or a sophisticated package that needs

In these days of cut-throat competition for any spare cash you might have left over after paying the mortgage and feeding the cat, it isn't enough to build a better mousetrap and wait for a grateful nation to beat a path to your door. You have to get out and sell.



Richard and David Darling made a fortune writing and marketing their own programs for the CPC. Could you do the same for the PCW?

either demonstration or explanation then this is really an essential route to take.

If you decide to go via distributors then the first hurdle is going to be selling the product to the distributor, after all, they don't want to be caught with stock they can't shift. Selling to a distributor means a finished product, a

Sales technique

Brian Worts of Thurston Techniques came to computer software via word processing training. His path from employee to entrepreneur was more accident than design. After some months spent teaching LocoScript to new owners of the PCW 8256 he'd accumulated so much training material that it began to look like a saleable product. "I approached Minerva with the idea of selling my material as a self teaching course, and they bought it. That became Typewrite and

Lernloco," he explained.

His skill with LocoScript prompted many people to ask him for specialised templates and this time, when they had mounted up enough, he decided to market the templates himself. Thus began the Tempdisc series of ready-made Loco templates for business and leisure users. Worts' business is now full time. "I tend to go very carefully with new products, keeping out of debt and doing one thing at a time," he says.

convincing amount of market research, an advertising budget and good packaging; very good packaging. Get a properly printed label and pack: it costs pence but looks much more professional.

Boxing clever

If a manual is necessary then it should be professionally written and properly typeset; the book of the program. This applies especially to a complex package. It takes a long time to build up a good reputation but no time at all to get a bad one for being difficult to use because of a poor manual (or having too many bugs). Cutting corners by putting the manual on disc is cheating and nobody likes the result.

The next consideration is the bigger box all this goes into. In general a rigid cardboard or plastic box is necessary. It might be possible to include the disc in the documentation provided you've gone for a rigid ring binder.

The line between an attractive package that draws the eye and a garish package that looks as if its trying to prove something is a fine one. The cost of proper design can be made back in the course of few day's sales; the cost of poor design can be bankruptcy. Software, perhaps more than most products, depends for success on how it is perceived by the buyer.

The cost of designing the total package can be surprisingly high. A professional agency fee might well run into thousands of pounds. Fortunately there are any number of freelance designers eager to try their skills for more reasonable fees - try the Yellow Pages. You need to see some of the work they've already done to decide whether or not their ideas are right for you.

Post dated cheques

The unit cost of the package, how much each costs to produce once the final design is agreed, depends on too many factors to itemise. For a game with no manual and no separate box it might be as low as £2 to £3, including the disc copying, for small runs of 500 or so. A package with a manual and perhaps other inserts, a full colour box and contoured internal packing would obviously cost a lot more, perhaps £5 to £15, more if your manual needs special illustrations.

So what about mail order? This suits the smaller supplier with a product aimed at a specialist market. You aren't looking for an impulse buyer or credibility with corporate purchasing departments. You probably aren't looking for very large volume sales either (though you can always hope it will turn out otherwise).

How small can you start? The minimum requirement is a box of discs, a program and an advertisement in the computer press. The last item is important. If you don't advertise then no-one is going to know you have anything to sell. In the case of somebody just starting out the advertising is always going to be the largest single ongoing expense.

Is there anybody there?

Advertising rates depend almost entirely on circulation figures. This means that some magazines are a lot cheaper to advertise in than others. However, if the information fails to reach the market then the real cost may be a lot higher than it appears in terms of lost sales. The answer here is to check circulation figures and work it out in terms of pennies per person reached. Check the 'ABC' figure - it should be in the magazine. If it doesn't have one you have only the advertising salesperson's word for the figures they quote you!

Your advertisement should look professional since it is all your customers will know about you. Don't prepare the artwork yourself, and certainly not your PCW; most advertising media offer free or cheap typesetting rates. If you are investing a lot, get the help of a local advertising agency in the Yellow Pages.

The other problem for the mail order supplier lies in the persistence of memory. Unless they have some particular reason to remember a thing most people don't, their memories are short. You need to keep your product in the minds of prospective customers, and this means in front of their eyes. For the mail order supplier the only way is constant advertisement. This is likely to be the largest drain on the fledgeling company resources.

So how successful are you going to be? As in all business you will need good luck, a lot of persistence and some luck. If your product is a game then you need a constant supply of them since the product life is relatively short. You can make a lot of money but more games companies go broke than make millions.

If you are selling utilities and they're good then market penetration will be slow but steady. With good backup (mail order customers always come direct to you with their problems) and persistence you can make a steady income but don't order the Porsche until the money is all in.

If you are selling applications software then life is uncertain. It almost certainly cost a lot to develop and a number of people will be involved. The right product can sell for a long time and to a lot of people. The wrong one can go down with all hands.

Nowhere is market research more important. A product that people will use every day for the life of their machine has to be right, has to be seen to be right and has to be marketed well. It really is an area for professionals and if you aren't one then you need to either become one or hire one since you're in the big league now. ■

Mail order

Mail order is the traditional route for small businesses to grow. It is a very effective way of reaching a large number of customers. Many of the most successful computer-related businesses in the country. The advantages are a few extra sales and being able to work in your spare time. As you will generally be selling by post it doesn't matter that there is nobody on the other end of the phone when you call.

Thinking small

Bradway Software is a small company run on a part time basis selling utility software. "We started about four years ago selling for the Spectrum computer," said the man behind it all Richard Bradway. "It grew out of enthusiasm. We wanted to provide facilities that the Spectrum lacked, like a screen dump." Bradway wrote all the software in Turbo Pascal for easy conversion to other machines.

He keeps overheads low by doing all the copying on their own machines in small

batches as needed. Printed inlays are done in lots of about 500 leaving only the advertising as a major up-front expense.

"The business takes up evenings and weekends. It pays for a good annual holiday, but if I thought of it in pounds per hour I'd give up tomorrow!" says Richard. This sort of business really has to be looked at as a self financing hobby. The risks are negligible, the financial rewards slight but the satisfaction great.

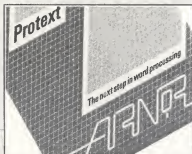
Maxamising profits

Amor are well known now in PCW circles for their excellent word processor, Protext. The company began only four years ago in a bedroom in Croydon with the Maxam assembler for the CPC 464, written by Gavin Every and Mark Tilley. Protext on the CPC grew out of the text editor included with Maxam. It proved successful for the PCW and soon made the transition to the PCW; Amor are now an established full-time 'smallish' software company, based in Peterborough.

Protext is now available on the PC and Atari and, in the new year, on the Amiga. Amor recently went international with a German version of Protext called Protext.

They choose to market their products both by mail order and through retail sales. Retail sales produces the larger turnover but

the mail order provides greater profit per unit. Their success in the mail order field and the professional presentation of their products has led to the successful retail marketing of their software.



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Dbase II	£20.95	£11.95
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Sage Retrieve	£49.95	£15.95
DATAMax	£29.95	£14.95
DATAMax Gift Pack	£39.95	£18.95
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Locoscript 2	£21.95
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The BASIC on the Z88 is a variant of BBC BASIC, a bit different to the Mallard dialect you have on your PCW. The Z88 has no 'while' command, for example; you can't EDIT individual lines as per Mallard, you just type them in again; you have to type words like PRINT and LIST in upper case; but on the plus side it has a couple of features Mallard doesn't, like a variable TIME which you can use as a timer.

Perhaps most important, the Z88 has virtually no equivalent of those escape codes so beloved of Mallard users – you know, things like PRINT CHR\$(27) + "Q" + CHR\$(F) + CHR\$(2615) + CHR\$(7) + "; " and so on to create windows on the screen or reverse out characters. So any program with those in must have them edited out, possibly adapted, before piping them across to the Z88.

Bridge that Jap

Consider an example. You've written a simple routine on the PCW to test your knowledge of Japanese, which you're learning, and think it would be nice to have this on your Z88 for the plane trip to Tokyo. Suppose the listing is something like this:

```
10 READ q$:READ rightans$
20 PRINT "What is the Japanese for ";q$
30 INPUT ans$
40 IF ans$="q" THEN GOTO 70
50 IF ans$=rightans$ THEN PRINT "Correct" :
GOTO 10
60 PRINT "Wrong! Correct answer is ";rightans$ :
GOTO 10
70 STOP
100 DATA hello,konnichi wa,see you,jaa mata,
  thanks,arigatoh
110 DATA big,ohkii,little,chiisai ...and so on.
This will work with no modification on the Z88! The thing to
do is save it as ASCII (ie. SAVE "JAPTEST.BAS", A in
BASIC) and then transfer it as you would a normal text
document.
```

You can't run JAPTEST.BAS on the Z88 direct from BASIC on the Z88, however. If you try LOADING it in BASIC you get 'Bad program', not a comment on the quality of it but a sign that it's unreadable in its present form.

So, in PipeDream, load the file JAPTEST.BAS as 'plain text' and add at the beginning three lines (add three lines at the start with [DIAMOND]N three times):

```
#B
.J
NEW
```

the significance being as follows. You're going to 'execute' this file, which means you tell the Z88 to treat everything in the file as if a phantom typist were keying its contents in for you. The #B represents [SQUARE]B – the command to enter BASIC – the .J means 'take everything from here at face value, there are no funny codes' and NEW clears out any program already in BASIC, just as on the PCW.

Save the file JAPTEST.BAS with the extra lines as 'plain text' and execute it as follows: press [SQUARE]F for the file, move the cursor down to 'execute' and press [RETURN]. Give the name of the file as JAPTEST.BAS. You go into BASIC automatically, clear out the old program, and see the lines of the program being typed in for you – if the listing is long this takes a while!

One who knows, runs

Now you can RUN the program as per any BASIC. From here you can add lines (DATA lines for example) on the Z88, save it, and generally treat it as a normal Z88 BASIC listing from now on.

What if you make amendments to the listing – say you add data on your Japanese trip – and then want to transfer it

A CHANGE OF PROGRAM

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You don't have to restrict your Z88 to being a notepad which can transfer its documents to the PCW when you get home. As well your diary and calculator and so on, you've got BASIC on the Z88, making it possible to use programs on both machines... up to a point.

back to your PCW? The reverse procedure throws up more problems. You can't edit a Z88 BASIC listing in PipeDream directly – as the Z88 BASIC can't EDIT lines like Mallard, this is very annoying!

The equivalent of Mallard's 'save as ASCII' is as follows. In Z88 BASIC, at the > prompt, type LIST[SQUARE]H[+]ENTER and when the listing has finished type [SQUARE]S. This creates a file called S.sgn on RAM drive 'S' which contains the text of the listing.

Enter PipeDream as usual and load this file ([DIAMOND]FL giving the name of file to load as :RAM.-/S.sgn) as 'plain text'. You can then edit it as usual with PipeDream (deleting the line of garbage at the end) and get the amended listing typed back into BASIC for you by execute's phantom typist as above. Or of course you can send the PipeDreamed BASIC listing across to your PCW and when in BASIC over there just load it as usual.

PIPEDREAM A1	
BLOCKS	A.....B.....C.....
CURSOR	1 #B
EDIT	2 J
FILES	3 NEW
LAYOUT	4 10 READ q\$:READ rightans\$
OPTIONS	5 20 PRINT "What is the Japanese for ";q\$
PRINT	6 30 INPUT ans\$

Making that PipeDream file into a BASIC listing – now it must be executed

PIPEDREAM A1	
BLOCKS	1
CURSOR	Name of file to load :RAM.-/S.sgn
EDIT	Insert at slot No
FILES	Limit to range of rows No
LAYOUT	Load as plain text Yes
OPTIONS	
PRINT	

Loading your BASIC listing, temporarily stored as the file S.sgn, into PipeDream

The same difference

These are some commands you must beware of in a Mallard BASIC listing if you're going to transfer it to the Z88.

Some things are the same – the ASCII character set to 127 for example is the same, so CHR\$(97) is 'a' in both versions, and ASC("T") is 93 on both. READ and DATA work in the same way too.

Complicated stuff like conversion of PRINT USING statements and file handling (OPEN "O";1,file\$ and PRINT #2,a\$ and the like) is best resolved by reading the Z88 manual.

PRINT CHR\$(27)+...

None of these will work on the Z88. Replace screen positioning (...+"Y"+...) and window commands (...+"X"+...) by the TAB function (PRINT TAB(X,Y) prints the text which follows at X across and Y down on the Z88 screen).

Clearing the screen is just CLS in Z88 BASIC, so replace PRINT CHR\$(27)+"E"+CHR\$(27)+"H" by CLS.

All other codes you may as well ignore apart from a couple of 'standards' eg. PRINT CHR\$(7) is a beep in Z88 BASIC as well as Mallard. PRINT CHR\$(13) is a return, PRINT CHR\$(8) is a backspace etc.

LPRINT...

Obviously all of these are right out, not having a PCW printer which can be attached to the Z88.

WHILE...WEND

Sorry, not in Z88 BASIC. Use IF...THEN...ELSE or REPEAT...UNTIL eg:

```
10 WHILE x<10 : x=x+1 : WEND becomes
10 IF x<10 THEN x=x+1 : GOTO 10 or
10 REPEAT x=x+1 UNTIL x>=(10+1)
```

PEEK, POKE

No way. The Z88's memory is organised differently to the PCW's so you can't tinker with it in the same way. If a listing depends on these commands to work it just won't go on a Z88, however...

Times

...if the PEEKs and POKEs are only for the purposes of recording times you can get round them by using the Z88's TIME command which records times in hundredths of a second. This means a bit of rewriting. For example

```
10 TIME=0
20 REPEAT UNTIL TIME=500
30 PRINT "You have just aged five seconds"
sets the timer to zero, repeats nothing (ie. waits) until it has
clocked up 500 ticks (ie. 5 seconds) and then continues with
the program.
```

INKEY\$

Needs a figure after it in Z88 BASIC telling it how many hundredths of a second to wait:

```
10 k$=""
20 IF k$="" THEN k$=INKEY$(0) : GOTO 20
30 PRINT "You pressed "k$
Waits for you to press a key then prints the key you pressed.
Note IF...THEN instead of WHILE...WEND. INKEY$ is similar
but works with ASCII values.
```

An alternative command to use is REPEAT with GET which stores the ASCII number of the last character pressed:

```
10 REPEAT UNTIL GET=13
20 (continues...)
makes the program pause until you press [ENTER], whose
ASCII value is 13. The command REPEAT UNTIL GET=121
would wait for you to press 'y' similarly (not 'Y' or anything
else). GET$ is similar but works with characters.
```

>RUN

**What is the Japanese for hello
? konnichi wa**

Correct

**What is the Japanese for see you
? jaa mata**

That BASIC listing worked on the Z88

How it's all done

A brief resume of how to transfer text files. This assumes you have already connected your PCW to the Z88 via an RS 232 interface on the back of your PCW and a suitable cable, of course!

Z88-PCW

1. Save your document on the Z88 as plain text (Yes to bottom option on 'save' menu) as say THING.DOC
2. On the PCW enter CP/M and at the A> file SETSIO XXX: α[RETURN]. Insert a disc with PIP on it.
3. Now type PIP[RETURN]. Insert your disc to hold the transferred file and at the asterisk type THING.DOC-XXX: and don't press [RETURN] (you can have a different name to the one on the Z88 but it's easiest to keep them the same)
4. On the Z88 enter the transfer mode with [SQUARE]x
5. Then type s[RETURN] for 'send file'.
6. Give the name THING.DOC and press [RETURN] on both machines.
7. Figures should appear on the Z88. When they stop, enter the terminal with [SQUARE]v
8. Press [DIAMOND]2 to end the sending process.
9. On the PCW the asterisk prompt should reappear. [STOP] to CP/M.
10. Typing DIR should confirm that THING.DOC is now on the PCW's A drive.
11. (LocoScript users) Start up LocoScript. Insert the disc with THING.DOC and create a new file. In it "insert text" ([F1] Loco 2, [F7] Loco 1) cursor over

THING.DOC on the disc manager then press [ENTER]. 12. Replace all occurrences of (space)[RETURN] by (space) in the transferred document.

PCW to Z88

0. Make a file END consisting of [EXIT]E. To do this, run CP/M and at the A> prompt type PIP. Insert the disc which will hold your PCW documents and type END-XXX: [RETURN]. Press [EXIT] then the 'E' key; finish with [ALT]z. You only need make this file once.

1. Save your PCW document as plain text. (In LocoScript this means making an ASCII file, [F1] Loco 2 [F7] Loco 1). Say the name is THING.DOC.

2. On the Z88 enter the transfer mode with [SQUARE]x. Type r[RETURN] for 'receive file' and give the name THING.DOC (or anything you like, but it's easiest to keep it the same as the one on the PCW). Don't press [RETURN] yet.

3. On the PCW run up CP/M and at the A> prompt type SETSIO XXX: α[RETURN].

4. Type PIP[RETURN].

5. At the asterisk insert the THING.DOC disc; type AUX:=THING.DOC; press [RETURN] on both machines.

6. Figures should whirl on the Z88. When they stop type on the PCW AUX:=END[RETURN].

7. The Z88 should beep to show it's finished.

8. [SQUARE]v enters PipeDream [DIAMOND]F5 loads the file. Give the name THING.DOC and specify Yes for 'plain text' (bottom option).

Troubleshooting

- If nothing happens when you press [DIAMOND]z (or send END across) check the connections and try again (you may have to reset and start from scratch).
- If nothing happens repeatedly your cable might not be wired correctly - your local computer shop can check it for you. Take page 189 of your Z88 manual along.
- If the file has only part transferred, check you typed SETSIO XXX ON and try again.
- If the file is gibberish when you insert it into the LocoScript documents, check you saved it as plain text on the Z88 and start again.
- Saving your Z88 file as plain text can have odd consequences if you don't load it into PipeDream again as plain text. It will appear in one single column with all tabs replaced by reversed out ls. Loading it in as plain text rectifies this.
- E signs come across to the PCW as 'BA3' into your PCW document; change all 'BA3' to 'E' using [EXCH]. There is some gibberish at the beginning of your transferred file on the PCW which can be deleted.

If you find this all too much, C Port (01 376 8038) do a Z88-PCW transfer utility - by typing IMPEXP and following the prompts the above is done for you. For £24.95 you get the software, manual and the necessary cables (£15 or so by themselves).

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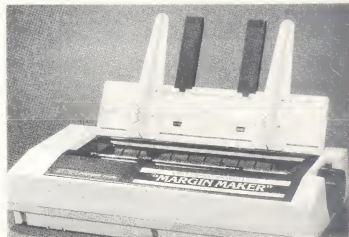
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If you've ever published a book you are probably nodding your head wisely and murmuring "Public Lending Right". If you've published books but don't know this phrase, you're almost certainly missing out and should read on – likewise if you merely *hope* to get published one day.

What PLR is

PLR is a pleasant attempt at giving a fair deal to authors whose masterworks are borrowed a lot in UK libraries. Say you've written a novel retailing at £10 and get £1 royalty every time someone buys and reads a copy. (If you're a jaded, cynical author, you may not mind staying unread so long as the book gets bought...)

When the buyer is a public library, hordes of people will read the book, but the return to the author used to be the same: one 10% royalty fee only. Can't the author be rewarded a bit – that is, paid for public lending right as he or she might be for translation or film rights? For a long time there were arguments about charging a penny a loan and passing the revenue to authors: this would have been hellish to administrate in pre-computer days, and all the librarians were naturally dead against it.

The difficulties of introducing the PLR idea were compounded by the sort of conservatism which resisted other changes, like allowing women to vote. Authors have long been regarded as scum, and copyright protection is unique in law as being biodegradable: if you build a house it can be inherited by your descendants for decades or centuries, but if you

write a book which still sells 50 years after your death, it goes into the public domain – anyone can reprint it, issue an edited version, etc.

How PLR works

Now that so many libraries are computerized, the big PLR computer in Stockton-on-Tees merely has to gross up the borrowings recorded by twenty sample libraries: this produces an estimate of how many times each book by each PLR-registered author has been borrowed in the given year. I was cheered in 1988 to find that my own first book (published 1979) was reckoned to have had more than 3000 readers over the previous year.

Yes, all the authors in the scheme get statements detailing the statistics for every edition of every book: it makes for morbidly compulsive reading.

PLR funding comes from a big lump of Government money somewhat arbitrarily allotted by the Minister for the Arts. After deducting running costs (for the computer and its acolytes), the remaining lot is divided up amongst the authors: the 1988 dividend was an exciting 1.12p per estimated loan. It would be less, but in order to weight PLR distribution towards starving as opposed to ultra-popular authors, no one is allowed to rake off more than £5000.

The PLR office is an oddly friendly department of the Civil Service: they actually answer queries in plain English and give unstuffy advice. What, I asked, do I do about this book I wrote with a pal who isn't eligible because he's American? The reply: get him to waive the share of PLR which he can't claim anyway, apply for 100% of PLR income on the book, and slip your friend whatever percentage of this amount your conscience tells you.

Along with your PLR statement for the year, you get a fascinating leaflet of arcane statistics. Last time we were told that 57 authors had achieved the top whack of £5000, that 49% of those registered got less than £1000, and that the whole distribution was based on an estimated 639 million library loans grossed up from an



A page in
the company
of author and
PCW pundit
David Langford

LANGFORD

actual sample of 7.6 million, only 235 million of the total loans being of books actually registered for PLR....

I need hardly mention that there are statistical checks designed to ensure that the estimated loans aren't boosted over-much by your entire family taking out all your books six times a week.

How to join in the fun

So how do you climb aboard? If you've published a book, and your name (or a pseudonym which is all your own) appears on the title page in company with not too many co-authors (books with four or more authors are ineligible on grounds of Too Much Work All Round), it's probably worth registering. I remember the anguished and envious groans on that very first PLR dividend day in 1984, from those who hadn't registered because "obviously" the scheme

would never bring them a penny. Oh yes – as well as all the above you must live in the UK and not be dead.

Registration itself is pretty simple; it used to be more tortuous, but the system has been fine-tuned since the early days. Basically, in the great tradition of our Civil Service, you fill in a form. All the information can be had from the Public Lending Right Office, Bayheath House, Prince Regent Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS18 1DF.

Being a fairly obscure author myself, I'm still boggled by the fact that PLR brings me a little bonus each year, and also by the nuggets of accompanying information – like the fact that one book that never made me much in royalties is my most popular in libraries, with uncounted thousands of loans. I owe it all to you lot. And to the computers.

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COMPETITION

There are various kinds of Chinese torture employed by the PCW to make you give up word processing (yes, we know it's actually made in South Korea). The most obvious tactic is for it to beep inexplicably and refuse to do something. Then as soon as you get a friend round to show them, it all works fine. But there are plenty of other tricks where that came from.

For example, there's the noise produced by the PCW printer. You may have thought having the builders in was bad, but that's nothing compared to the clatter produced by a 9512 printer hacking through a few letters. You can't even hear people shouting at you that the printer's very noisy. What you could do with is one of those printer hoods to muffle the sound.

And what about those times when someone catches their foot on the power cable and unplugs your PCW just as you were about to save four hours' work? Any sensible machine would have some sort of safeguard against this.

A hood and a backpack

8000 Plus is offering three first prizes of printer hoods and three second prizes of battery backpacks to the winners of our New Year competition. Both products are made by Isenstein, who supply a range of add-ons for the PCW (including replacement parts such as keyboards and printers for when you throw your deafening daisywheel out the window in frustration).

The printer hoods are available for any PCW printers (state which machine you have) and cut down the clatter so you can hear people telling you that the printer's very noisy. The battery backpacks fit into the expansion slot at the back of the machine. If the power is cut off they will save the state of the memory, so when you switch back on your data is still there. They have a 'piggy-back' slot on them enabling you to plug any mouse or RS232 interfaces on top of them.

To win one of these all you have to do is answer the six general knowledge questions below on the subject of noise. Put your answers on a postcard or sealed empty envelope with your name, address and model of PCW and send it to: *Noise Competition, 8000 Plus, 4 Queen St, Bath BA1 1EJ*. The first three correct entries picked out of the paper recycling box on February 6th win the printer hoods, the next three the battery backpacks (though you can specify one or other of the prizes if you wish). The winners will be announced in the March issue of 8000 Plus.

Questions

1. According to Norse mythology, Baldr had a sense of hearing so keen he could hear which of the following?
 - a) Address marks falling off a corrupted disc
 - b) Wool growing on the backs of sheep
 - c) Someone touch typing on a Z88 keyboard
2. Which of the following could be heard 2,968 miles away?
 - a) The eruption of Krakatoa
 - b) The 9512 printer
 - c) Stockbrokers talking in a wine bar

3. Thomas More was executed for refusing to say anything. What was his position?
 - a) Head of Amstrad's PR
 - b) President of the USA during Watergate
 - c) Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII

4. Which of the following languages is said to be impossible to whisper because of its system of tones?

- a) American English
- b) Chinese
- c) Italian

5. Which of the following cannot actually hear anything you say?
 - a) Snakes
 - b) Amstrad's Technical Support Service
 - c) Anyone playing 'Tetris'

6. What did Beethoven and Smetana have in common?
 - a) Both were major composers, except for Smetana
 - b) Both wrote songs for Kylie Minogue
 - c) They both went deaf

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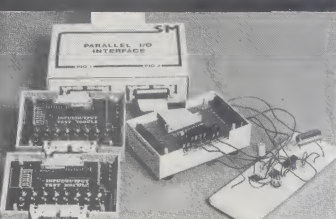
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LISTINGS

Teach your old PCW new tricks with three unbelievably useful utilities!

SCREENSAVE

by Lawrence Simons

Lawrence Simons' plot routine (printed in the August 1988 issue) created a great deal of interest, adding as it did a much needed plot command to BASIC. He has now completed the process by writing a program to save those wonderful screens you've all been busy creating to disc. By including these lines in your own BASIC programs you will add the facility to save and load screens within that program using CALL appropriately.

Once saved the screens can be loaded back in again from disc at any time. Since images can be extremely time consuming to generate in BASIC, being able to create them, save them and load them back in again when required will allow programs to do tricks with graphics previously impossible due to the time taken to draw screens. 'Help' screens and opening titles to a program are obvious applications.

The screensave program will run just as it is.

It will ask if you want to Save or Load (S/L) a screen then prompt you for a filename at the current cursor position and either save or load a screen as asked. If there is no file of that name then the load will fail so save one first.

The program is in three sections. The first part, from Line 10 to line 140 is merely a demonstration of how to use Screensave. It asks for a filename and whether you want to load or save a screen. The second part is from 54000 to 54140 and is the loader. The loader sets the top of memory to HBFFFF (this means that BASIC can't put anything at any higher address) and then reads the machine code routines into the protected part of memory. These routines don't clash with the plot routines previously written by Lawrence Simons and they can all exist together quite happily.

Exit picture stage right

The fourth part is the actual machine code routines to save and load the screen. In its present form all you can save is whatever happens to be on the screen when you invoke it. But like Lawrence Simons' earlier offerings you are intended to adapt this program to your own purposes.

How do you do that? The simplest way is to put anything you like between lines 50 and 60.

For example, if you put the line 55 PRINT CHR\$(27) + "E" + CHR\$(27) + "H" then the screen would clear and the cursor homed before being saved. You will have a file 24k long with nothing but the cursor in it! If you'd called the file CLEAR.SCR then loading CLEAR.SCR again would overwrite everything on the screen leaving it blank (apart from the flashing cursor), original cursor and the proper flashing cursor).

Obviously the example is trivial but it shows one way to use the program for your own purposes. If you need to write a lot in between 50 and 60 then renumber the lines from 60 to 140 to give you extra room. Of course you can rewrite as much of the first section as you like just so long as you keep line 10 to set up the SCREENSAVE and SCREENLOAD routines in memory - and CALL the routines as demonstrated in line 120. The lines from 54000 onwards must be included in any program using the screen load and save routines.

No doubt there will soon be discs full of pictures doing the rounds all ready to be loaded in, worked on or simply admired. Send your best efforts to 8000 magazine for our delight and detection.

Any program you write including these routines must include the lines from 54000 onwards.

```

10 GOSUB 54000
20 INPUT "Do you want to save or load (S/L)";S$
30 IF UPPER$(S$)="L" THEN 100
40 INPUT "What name for the screen file ";A$
50 AS=AS+CHR$(0)
60 CALL SCREENSAVE(AS,E%)
70 IF E%<>0 THEN PRINT "Screen save not successful. Try again":GOTO 40
80 END
100 INPUT "What file do you want loaded";A$
110 AS=AS+CHR$(0)
120 CALL SCREENLOAD(AS,E%)
130 IF E%<>0 THEN PRINT "File load unsuccessful. Try again":GOTO 100
140 END
54000 REM Set up SCREENSAVE & SCREENLOAD machine-code routines
54010 MEMORY &HBFFF

```

05F6
1794
0873
15D8
0516
0ABD
2397
02B2
1554
0546
0AB6
21B9
0367
1F4E
08B8

1

```

54020 SCREENSAVE=&HC400:SCREENLOAD=&HC46D:A=SCREENSAVE:E=0
54030 RESTORE 54150
54040 FOR F=0 TO 40
54050 S=0
54060 FOR G=0 TO 7
54070 READ X$:X=VAL("&H"+X$)
54080 S=S+X:POKE A,X:A=A+1
54090 NEXT
54100 READ X$:IF S<>VAL("&H"+X$) THEN E=E+1:PRINT "ERROR IN LINE";10*(F+5415)
54110 NEXT
54120 IF E=0 THEN RETURN
54130 PRINT E;"ERROR";:IF E=1 THEN PRINT ELSE PRINT "S"
54140 END
54150 DATA ED, 73, 4D, C5, 31, 6D, C5, D5, 4AA

```

1A99
07C6
06F2
0311
06E2
0A33
0B99
03F6
21BF
03D2
0BC9
199A
02E7
0CF4

2

LISTINGS PLUS

54160 DATA CD, DF, C4, CD, 2C, C4, CD, 04, 4FE	0DA0
54170 DATA C5, AF, F5, 01, 5C, C4, CD, 5A, 4B1	0C8A
54180 DATA FC, B9, 00, CD, 3C, C4, F1, 3C, 4DF	0D96
54190 DATA FE, 20, 38, EE, CD, 4C, C4, 11, 432	0CEF
54200 DATA 00, 00, 18, 6A, 0E, 16, 11, 5C, 113	0B38
54210 DATA 00, CD, 05, 00, 3C, C0, D1, 11, 2B0	0B1D
54220 DATA 02, 00, 18, 5A, 0E, 15, 11, 5C, 104	0B41
54230 DATA 00, CD, 05, 00, AF, C8, D1, 11, 323	0B4C
54240 DATA 03, 00, 18, 4A, 0E, 10, 11, 5C, 0F0	0B33
54250 DATA 00, CD, 05, 00, 3C, C0, D1, 11, 2B0	0B31
54260 DATA 04, 00, 18, 3A, CD, 29, C5, EE, 2FC	0C23
54270 DATA 11, 6D, C5, 01, D0, 02, ED, B0, 3B3	0B32
54280 DATA C9, 3C, 00, 4A, 00, ED, 73, 4D, 2FC	0C92
54290 DATA C5, 31, 6D, C5, D5, CD, DF, C4, 56D	0D2C

3

54300 DATA CD, B3, C4, CD, 04, C5, AF, F5, 57E	0D95
54310 DATA CD, C3, C4, F1, F5, 01, D3, C4, 5D2	0C99
54320 DATA CD, 5A, FC, B9, 00, F1, 3C, FE, 537	0D5D
54330 DATA 20, 38, EC, 11, 00, 00, D5, 0E, 238	0B06
54340 DATA 1A, ED, 5B, 49, C5, CD, 05, 00, 342	0C87
54350 DATA 0E, 2C, 3A, 4B, C5, 5F, CD, 05, 2B5	0C68
54360 DATA 00, D1, E1, 73, 23, 72, ED, 7B, 422	0BD0
54370 DATA 4D, C5, C9, 0E, 0F, 11, 5C, 00, 265	0C39
54380 DATA CD, 05, 00, 3C, C0, D1, 11, 02, 2B2	0BC7
54390 DATA 00, 18, D3, 0E, 14, 11, 5C, 00, 17A	0B1D

4

54440 DATA 45, C5, 73, 23, 72, 23, 36, 5C, 2C7	0B80
54450 DATA 23, 36, 00, 0E, 98, 11, 45, C5, 21A	0B4D
54460 DATA CD, 05, 00, 7C, B5, C8, D1, 11, 3AD	0C47
54470 DATA 01, 00, 18, A6, 0E, 31, 11, 69, 178	0B2B
54480 DATA C4, CD, 05, 00, 22, 49, C5, 0E, 2D4	0BCF
54490 DATA 1A, 11, 6D, C5, CD, 05, 00, 0E, 23D	0C3D
54500 DATA 31, 11, 6B, C4, CD, 05, 00, 32, 275	0B50
54510 DATA 4B, C5, 0E, 2C, 1E, 06, C3, 05, 236	0C2C
54520 DATA 00, 6F, 26, 00, 29, 29, 29, 29, 139	0AC6
54530 DATA 11, 00, B6, 19, 5E, 23, 56, 7B, 232	0B46
54540 DATA E6, F8, CB, 27, CB, 12, 47, 7B, 46F	0CC3
54550 DATA E6, 07, B0, 5F, C9, 00, 00, 00, 2C5	0B86

5

KEY TESTER

by John Warland

Each key generates its own unique number in the computer when pressed. Pressing "a" sends 97 to your PCW; [DEL] left sends 127. If the program you're

writing tests the keys pressed by the user (with INKEY\$ for example) you'll want to know which key sends which number.

Just run the program and press any key. The value it generates will be displayed in both decimal and hex. When the screen is full it clears and you can do it all again.

The program works by using INKEY\$ to get the value of the key you pressed and assigning it to i\$. The actual numeric value is found with ASC(i\$) and this is used from then on.

Key Tester by John Warland		
Key	ASCII Num	Hex Num
a	97	61
b	98	62
c	99	63
d	100	64
e	101	65
f	102	66
g	103	67
h	104	68
i	105	69
j	106	6A
k	107	6B
l	108	6C
m	109	6D
n	110	6E
o	111	6F
p	112	70
q	113	71
r	114	72
s	115	73
t	116	74
u	117	75
v	118	76
w	119	77
x	120	78
y	121	79
z	122	7A
[91	5B
\	92	5C
]	93	5D
^	94	5E
_	95	5F
`	96	60
{	123	7B
	124	7C
}	125	7D
~	126	7E
DEL	127	7F

Character values at a glance

10 PRINT CHR\$(27)+"E"+CHR\$(27)+"H"	0B41
15 PRINT "Key tester by John Warland"	13CB
20 PRINT "Key", "ASCII Num", "Hex Num"	1031
30 i\$="":WHILE i\$="" :i\$=INKEY\$:WEND	1056
40 count=count+1:IF count=28 THEN RUN	153B
50 IF ASC(i\$)<33 THEN 70	0966
60 PRINT CHR\$(ASC(i\$)),ASC(i\$),HEX\$(ASC(i\$)):GOTO 30	1488
70 PRINT CHR\$(27)+CHR\$(ASC(i\$)),ASC(i\$),HEX\$(ASC(i\$)):GOTO 30	1A79
	0000

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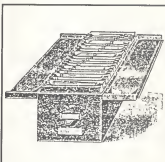
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STATUS LINE PLUS

by DJ Miller

Printer: LM: 0 | RM: 80 | PL: 70 | LPI: 6 | GAP: 3 | Pica | Upright | Normal |

The alternative printer status line

LPRINT is a program to enhance the printer setting capabilities of the [PTR] key. Pressing [PTR] when using CP/M produces a set of options on the bottom line of the screen (the status line). These options allow you to control the printer — line feed, form feed, etc. LPRINT gives you the ability to change other printer settings, such as lines per inch, line pitch, emphasis, etc., in a similar fashion.

The program should be called LPRINT.BAS and is designed to be used from the CP/M prompt. As well as the program LPRINT.BAS itself you will need SUBMIT.COM and BASIC on the M drive. You also need the following submit file named LPRINT.SUB. Now all this might seem a bit over the top but the final effect is so useful it really is worth setting it up.

```
PIP (name of file)-CON:[Q ^Z]
<S1
BASIC LPRINT.BAS
```

Create the above SUBMIT file using ED or RPED. The first line uses PIP to copy input from the console (keyboard) to a file. The Q option tells PIP to end the input when it encounters the character string following, in this case a blank. The ^Z terminates the string. The control character ^ is produced by pressing EXTRA and U.

The second line uses the SUBMIT facility of "stacking" console input. The "stacked" input

from the "console" is written into a file, which can then be interrogated by a BASIC program. Finally the third line calls the BASIC program LPRINT. The file FILENAME.EXT contains the parameters you passed to the SUBMIT command.

For example, if you entered the command LPRINT NEWFILE, then FILENAME.EXT would contain the single line NEWFILE. Your BASIC program could then interrogate that using a program line such as:

```
100 OPEN "I",1,"FILENAME.EXT": INPUT
#1,F$: CLOSE 1
```

The variable F\$ would then contain the string "NEWFILE".

From CP/M type lprint, followed optionally by a filename, e.g.

lprint or lprint letter.doc.

The screen is cleared, and a set of options

appears on the bottom line of the screen, in a similar fashion to that when the [PTR] key is pressed. Printer: LM: 0 | RM: 80 | PL: 70 | LPI: 6 | GAP: 3 | Pica | Upright | Normal

Lprint the lfile and lbe lquick

Initially, the left margin (LM) setting is highlighted. The value of zero can be increased and subsequently decreased by pressing the up arrow or down arrow keys (which act in auto-repeat fashion). To select another parameter to modify, use the left arrow or right arrow keys. The parameters that can be set are as follows:

LM: Left Margin (0-133)
RM: Right Margin (4-139)
PL: Page Length (1-127)
LPI: Lines Per Inch (6, 8 or 10)
GAP: Lines left blank at bottom of page (0-127)
Pica: Pica (10), Elite (12), Proprtn (proportional) or Condnsd (17)

Error terror

With each screen occupying 24k of disc space it's easy to make a mistake. Lawrence Simons has anticipated this and error messages are returned in E\$. What you do then is up to you.

No. SCRNSAVE
0 success
1 bad filename
2 couldn't create file
3 disc write error
4 couldn't close file

SCRNLOAD
success
bad filename
couldn't open file
disc read error

```
100 OPTION NOT TAB: WIDTH 255: DEFSTR a-z: REM print a file from CP/M
110 f=FILENAME("FILENAME.EXT")
115 IF f<>" " THEN OPEN "I",1,f: INPUT #1,s: CLOSE 1: KILL f: f=s
120 esc=CHR$(27): brv=esc+"p": erv=esc+"q"
125 DEF Fnp(c%)=esc+"Y"+CHR$(63)+CHR$(c%+31)
130 plus=CHR$(22): minus=CHR$(28): left=CHR$(1): right=CHR$(6): exit=CHR$(27)
140 up=CHR$(31): down=CHR$(30): vl=CHR$(149)
150 t(1)="LM: ": t(2)="RM: ": t(3)="PL: ": t(4)="LPI: ": t(5)="GAP: "
160 p%(1)=0: p%(2)=80: p%(3)=70: p%(4)=6: p%(5)=3: p%(6)=0: p%(7)=0: p%(8)=0
```

232B
0BB8
1ABF
11F0
1089
22F8
120F
14F6
15E7

1

```
170 m%(1)=133: m%(2)=139: m%(3)=127: m%(4)=10: m%(5)=127: m%(6)=3: m%(7)=1: m%(8)=1
180 n%(1)=0: n%(2)=4: n%(3)=1: n%(4)=6: n%(5)=0: n%(6)=0: n%(7)=0: n%(8)=0
190 o(6,0)="Pica ": o(6,1)="Elite ": o(6,2)="Proprtn": o(6,3)="Condnsd"
200 o(7,0)="Upright": o(7,1)="Italic ": o(8,0)="Normal ": o(8,1)="Enlarge"
210 PRINT esc+"H"+esc+"E"+esc+"0"+esc+"f":
220 PRINT esc+"X"+CHR$(63)+CHR$(32)+CHR$(32)+CHR$(121);
230 PRINT brv+"Printer"+erv+: LM: 0 "+vl+" PL: 70 "+vl;
240 PRINT " LPI: 6 "+vl+" GAP: 3 "+vl+" Pica "+vl+" Upright "+vl+" Normal "+vl;
```

2

LISTINGS PLUS

Upright: Upright or Italic
Normal: Normal width or Enlarged (double)
width

In the middle of all this, you can at any time press the [PTR] key and go to the normal printer status line, to change from draft to high quality printing, for example. When you press [ENTER] you return to the LPRINT options.

Press [EXIT] to return to CP/M. If a filename was specified when LPRINT was invoked, then the file specified will be printed out in the style selected (make sure there is paper in the printer). If no file was specified, then the chosen printer settings are stored in a file called MLPRLIST.LST, in a form suitable for the SETLST command to use, e.g. SETLST LPRINT.LST. The printer settings are not affected until the SETLST command is issued.

Clever lines

Line 100 sets the TAB and WIDTH settings to allow full screen control. Note the use of DEFSTR to avoid having to type in all those tedious dollar signs at the end of string variables. Line 110 looks for a file called FILENAME.EXT, reads the contents (the file to be printed if it was specified) and deletes it, saving the file to be printed in the string variable "F". Lines 120-140 define the screen control

characters, whilst lines 150-200 set the variables used for the parameter names ("I"), default values ("p%"), maxima ("m%") and minima ("n%"). The non-numeric values are held in string array "O".

Lines 210-240 set the screen up, whilst lines 250-380 handle the keyboard input and reset

the printer values accordingly, leaving line 390 to build up the screen afterwards. Lines 400-470 build the printer command string - note how line 400 sets up "esc" and "FNum" according to whether a file is to be printed or not. Finally, line 480 builds the LPRINT.LST file, or line 490 prints the file in the style chosen.

How to type in listings

First you need Mallard BASIC running on the PCW. To do this insert your CP/M copy disc, run CP/M and type BASIC at the A>.

BASIC will load and print ok to show it is ready. Now you can type in the listing as it appears on the page line by line but don't type in the four figure number at the end, this is a check number.

When the line is complete press [RETURN] and BASIC will digest it. If you make a mistake and notice it before pressing [RETURN] use [DEL] to get rid of it and type in the correct version. If you spot it after pressing [RETURN] type edit and the line number. You can then move along the line with the cursor keys, [DEL] the offending characters and retype. Finally press [RETURN] and the line will be accepted in the corrected form.

To see lines already put in type list and to print

them out list. When the listing is complete type save "a:keyprog or whatever you want to call it, there is no need to type bas after it. The filename can be any name up to 8 letters long. The listing is now safe on disc.

If the program doesn't run first time check your listing against the magazine listing. Usually there will be an error message giving a line number which will narrow down the search for the mistake though the mistake may not be in that particular line.

To run a program previously saved type load "a:keyprog or whatever the name is and then run. Any program can be loaded from any drive simply by preceding the program name with the drive letter and a colon. As a last resort - if all else fails - read the manual.

```

250 k=plus: i%=1: REM get input from keyboard 1D86
260 WHILE k=plus OR k=minus OR k=up OR k=down OR k=left OR k=right 1674
270 WHILE k=plus OR k=minus OR k=up OR k=down 238C
280 IF i%<6 THEN PRINT FNp(i%*10)+brv+tt(i%)+DEC$(p%(i%)),"###")+erv; 1778
290 IF i%>5 THEN PRINT FNp(i%*10)+brv+o(i%,p%(i%))+erv; 1BCB
300 k="": WHILE k="": k=INKEY$: WEND 1795
310 IF k=plus OR k=up THEN p%(i%)=MIN(p%(i%)+1-(i%=4),m%(i%)) 0E5E
320 IF k=minus OR k=down THEN p%(i%)=MAX(p%(i%)-1+(i%=4),n%(i%)) 174B
330 WEND 1AF3
340 IF i%<6 THEN PRINT FNp(i%*10)+tt(i%)+DEC$(p%(i%)),"###"); 03F6
350 IF i%>5 THEN PRINT FNp(i%*10)+o(i%,p%(i%)); 1568
360 IF k=left THEN k=plus: i%=i%-1 ELSE IF k>exit THEN k=plus: i%=i%+1 12AD
370 IF i%=0 THEN i%=8 ELSE IF i%=9 THEN i%=1 2179
380 WEND 1227
                                     0405
3
390 PRINT esc+"l"+esc+"e";: OPTION TAB: WIDTH 90: REM build printer controls 265F
400 IF f="" THEN esc="ESC": DEF FNum(n%)=" "+STR$(n%)+"" ELSE DEF FNum(n%)=CHR$(n%) 214A
410 lp=esc+"W"+FNum(p%(8))+esc 0C66
420 IF p%(4)=6 THEN lp=lp+"2" ELSE IF p%(4)=8 THEN lp=lp+"0" ELSE lp=lp+"1" 1EF5
430 lp=lp+esc+"C"+FNum(p%(3))+esc+"N"+FNum(p%(5))+esc 15D2
440 IF p%(6)=0 THEN lp=lp+"P" ELSE IF p%(6)=1 THEN lp=lp+"M" 18E8
450 IF p%(6)=2 THEN lp=lp+"p"+FNum(1) ELSE IF p%(6)=3 THEN lp=lp+FNum(15) 1F63
460 IF p%(7)=1 THEN lp=lp+esc+"4" ELSE lp=lp+esc+"5" 1697
470 lp=lp+esc+"l"+FNum(p%(1))+esc+"Q"+FNum(p%(2)) 145E
475 IF f<>"" THEN IF ""=FIND$(f) THEN f="" 0F08
480 IF f="" THEN OPEN "O",1,"LPRINT.LST": PRINT #1,lp;: CLOSE 1: SYSTEM ELSE LPRINT lp; 2AA3
490 OPEN "I",1,f: WHILE NOT EOF(1): LINE INPUT #1,lp: LPRINT lp: WEND: CLOSE 1: SYSTEM 28E1

```

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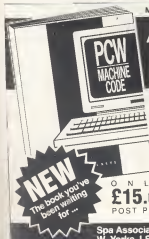
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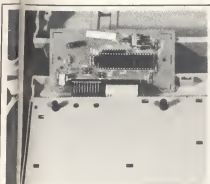
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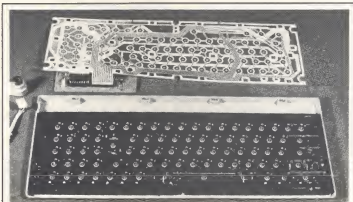


Unscrewing the small printed circuit board and unhooking the pegs will allow you to remove the metal plate and separate the membrane.

unplugging the lead to the monitor and then removing the two small screws which hold the green printed circuit board to the main keyboard.

The main keyboard now has to be dismantled. There are several rows of black pegs protruding through the metal base. Each of these hook shaped pegs must be sprung out of their slots. Finger pressure is enough but work from the front to the back not from side to side.

This will leave two metal plates and a flexible membrane to which the small printed circuit board is attached.



This is why it wasn't working! The amount of crud in there is staggering.

The membrane will probably be covered in a thin mat of dust and fibres which can short circuit the electrical connections on the membrane.

After wiping the membrane clean and blowing dust from the

top and bottom plates re-assemble it as above in reverse. You'll probably find that the keyboard now works perfectly.

GA Doyle
Wolverhampton

Mini Office from B

Don't believe everything you read. It is possible to get Mini Office Professional to load and run from drive B!

First copy all the Mini Office files to a drive B disc. Insert your CPM disc and type **PIP**. At the asterisk prompt insert your Mini Office disc in A and type **B:=***. At the **[RV]** prompt insert your Mini Office disc in A and type **B:=***. At the **[RV]** prompt insert your Mini Office disc in A and type **B:=***. At the **[RV]** prompt insert your Mini Office disc in A and type **B:=***.

Now create another file on drive B called **MOP.SUB** using **RPED** (or anything else that will produce an ASCII file - **LocoScript** for example) containing the following lines:

```
B:
OFFICE
A:
Make sure the files
SUBMIT.COM and
SETDEF.COM are on the disc
you usually boot CPM Plus
from (If you've made a copy of
```

your CPM disc they will be - check with **DIR**) and either create a **PROFILE.SUB** file with **RPED** containing the following line, or insert it into your existing **PROFILE.SUB** file:

```
SETDEF B:,A:,M:[ORDER =
(SUB,COM) TEMPORARY = B:]
You will now be able to run Mini Office and all of its parts from the B drive by typing MOP at the A: prompt - or have it auto run by putting MOP as the last line in the PROFILE.SUB. In either case you must have the Mini Office copy disc in B of course.
```

The only slight problem is that when loading or saving files or showing directories you will be given a default of A: unless you use the 'Catalogue Files By' option each time you load up and run a module.

Chris Quinn
The Wirral, Merseyside

should take you straight to the place where your record numbers are going to be. Type **###** here, followed by **[ENTER]**, then **[EXIT]**.

Record 2 has to be prepared in the same way with another **###**. Now re-save the file back to disk and leave Mini Office.

Now take a disc with **BASIC.COM** and the listing below

(ie. **RECORD.BAS**) and your database file. Type **BASIC RECORD** to run the program. When prompted, give the filename of the Mini Office database (including the .DBS) and be prepared for a short delay.

That's all. Re-run Mini Office and examine the database file. Every record will be labelled with a

number accessible from the **Merger** or the **Report** and **Labeller**.

To explain, all you have done is create a new field called **RECORD** and made sure that there is dummy data (###) in the first two records. The **RECORD** program checks that this is done accurately, and will abort with an error message if it's not happy.

The only limitations are that there should be no more than 256 records in the file, and each record should not exceed 512 characters. If you have a large database copy it to the M drive for speed.

GR Buckeridge
Bristol

```
10 DEFINT a-z
20 ON ERROR GOTO 390
30 PRINT:LINE INPUT "Mini-Office Filename Please -
";filename$
40 PRINT: OPEN "R",#1,filename$,1
50 FIELD #1,1 AS a$
60 FOR j=1 TO 8:GET #1,j:b$b=b$a$+a$:NEXT
70 IF b$b<"M03 Data" THEN PRINT"NOT a Mini Office
Database file":END
80 FOR i=32 TO 512
90 GET #1,i
100 IF UPPER$(a$)<>"R" THEN 130
110 b$b="":FOR j= i TO i+512:GET #1,j:b$b=b$a$+UPPER$(a$):NEXT
120 IF b$b="RECORD" THEN 150
130 NEXT
140 PRINT"NO Field called RECORD":END
150 s=i+6
160 FOR i=s TO i+512
170 GET #1,i
180 IF a$<>"#" THEN 210
190 b$b="":FOR j= i TO i+512:GET #1,j:b$b=b$a$+a$:NEXT
```

```
200 IF b$b="####" THEN b=b:i:GOTO 230
210 NEXT
220 PRINT"NO Opening '###' Field":END
230 s=i+3
240 FOR i=s TO i+512:GET #1,i
250 IF a$<>"#" THEN 280
260 b$b="":FOR j=i TO i+512:GET #1,j:b$b=b$a$+a$:NEXT
270 IF b$b="####" THEN e=i:GOTO 300
280 NEXT
290 PRINT"NO Closing '###' Field":END
300 GET #1,46:recs=ASC(a$):d=e-b
310 FOR i=1 TO recs
320 rec$=DEC$(i,"###")
330 FOR j=0 TO 2
340 LSET a$=MID$(rec$,j+1,1): PUT #1,b+j
350 NEXT
360 b=b+d: PRINT"***";
370 NEXT
380 CLOSE #1:END
390 IF ERL=40 THEN PRINT"Try Another Filename":RESUME 20
```

Capital idea

Just occasionally you need files converted from mixtures of lower and upper case (Like This) into upper case only (LIKE THIS) — mailing labels for example.

Suppose your mailing list (saved in ASCII) is called LIST.LBL. In CP/M, type FIP and make a copy in capitals of the file by typing

```
BRUNO BENT
ABANDON R CALABRIMIN
JAMES KELLY
B H PATTERSON
OSGARDEN ST JOHN-JAPHEN
GLOVEDMAN MESTERLOUCE
JAN-EMAN R KLEIN
HILVERMAN VAN RIJN
VIA MIZZARELLA 35 CELESTERE ROMA ITALIA
17 MELLENGE ST CALCUTTA WEST BENGAL INDIA
1 SUSSEX GARDENS GOSLOW SURREY GPO 224
3 ERYTHROLYNCH ST BRUSCHONCHONCH INVERNESS SCOTLAND
4 CLARKSON TERRACE SCOTLAND GLASGOW G4 2ER
THE MANOR GREENHOUSE NIMESHORE SUG3 EYN
2 HARRY MURPHY ST BRISTOL BUILDINGS ROYAL TOKYO 1145 JAPAN
222 NICHOLS AVE ST 22 WESSZA GDAK POLAND
253 RAYN CRESCENT COLLEGE GREEN LONDON W8B
RUMERANDSTRAAT 73 DRECHT THE NETHERLANDS
```

That name and address list before.

```
BRUNO BENT
ABANDON R CALABRIMIN
JAMES KELLY
B H PATTERSON
OSGARDEN ST JOHN-JAPHEN
GLOVEDMAN MESTERLOUCE
JAN-EMAN R KLEIN
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RUMERANDSTRAAT 73 DRECHT THE NETHERLANDS
```

...and after conversion

STOP right there

If you're inappropriately selected 'Finish Edit' or 'Save and Print' while editing a LocoScript document, if you act quickly you can usually manage to remain in edit mode by pressing [STOP] twice.

Ivanka Groznaya-Shutka Reading

Dated tip

This routine enables Protext users to put today's date in the current document by pressing [EXTRA]D — but also enables you to have the date inserted for you automatically in a document as it prints out.

To begin, first insert the line EXEC A:DATE1 [13] into your STARTUP file. Next create a one line document called DATE1, consisting of FF today DATE1 [13]. The word 'today' represents a data file which will contain only one line — today's date.

Finally you need to create a document file called DATE which is to consist of the following commands:

>271

at the asterisk

LIST.CAP=LIST.LBL[U].

It can take a bit of time!

The file LIST.CAP can be re-inserted in the original database (or back in LocoScript, via 'insert text'). Your original file in lower and upper case is still intact of course.

Patrick Leggatt

Farnham, Surrey

LocoScript labels

Printing continuous labels from LocoScript 2 can be easy if the label file is set up so that each name and address uses one page in a document. To do this you need to set up a page type and a template with a length equal to the number of lines on your labels (including the space between the bottom of one label and the top of the next). The simplest way to find the length is to feed in your labels and use direct printing to fill the label and then count the rows and columns. Allow an extra line for the space between the labels. Usually you can get 8 lines printed on a label but the tops of the labels themselves will be 9 lines apart, so your page length should be 9.

From the Disc Management Screen use [F6] to make a continuous paper type which has no top gap, the height you've calculated, and a bottom gap of one. Save it to SETTINGS.STD and call it LABELS.

Use an empty group on your correspondence disc and rename it LABELS then set up a TEMPLATE.STD and a layout using the paper type LABELS

you have just set up with no header and no footer. Set the margins to suit your label size less at least one character at either side.

Now simply create a document in which every name and address takes at least one page. If the name and address doesn't use the full depth of the page simply put in an End Page Here code with [ALT][RETURN]. When you print out your labels you may have to 'change to paper type' intended for document unless your printer is set up to print in LABELS.

In LocoScript 1, things are a little different. Your name and address list still has one item per page with an empty header and footer, but there is no concept of 'paper type'. Instead you have to configure the printer before you print them out as follows: press [PTR] and through [F1] set continuous stationery, the 'form length' to 9 and the gap to zero. [EXIT] leaves the 'printer control state' and you can then print out the labels.

Mary Nichols
Ely, Cambridge

Phrases overheard

If you need to frequently italicise or embolden words in Protext then performing the three key strokes needed ([ALT] X and the relevant code key) can get irritating after a few repetitions, and of course there is the ever present danger of forgetting to turn the code off — hands up anyone who has watched most of a letter print out underlined or italicised, or worse, everything the wrong way around, because of a missed code.

A neat solution to the problem is to tap in a phrase such as Key b ^24^b^24^b^2424. What this does is to put the two codes for bold onto the screen and then backspace over the second one.

Now, as you type, the second code will be pushed along ahead of the words. When you have written as much as you wish simply cursor over the second code. There isn't any way you can forget to turn off your special effects with this phrase in operation.

To get other effects just replace the b with the letter of your choice. To automate this process all the printer control codes you would normally use can be put into your startup file and will then be available every time you turn on the machine.

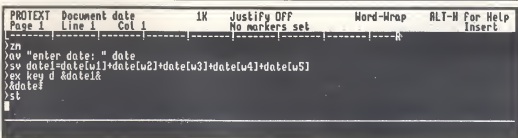
D Bell
London

Pitching it right

LocoScript gives a good choice of line pitches — 5, 6, 7 1/2 and 8. However, for filling in forms and for display work on the 9512 line pitch 7 is frequently required. The solution is simple.

If you use (+LS)/2/(+LP6) [RETURN](+LP8)[RETURN] at the end of each line this will give line pitch 7. It can be pasted into a phrase and of course switched off with (-LS)(-LP).

Other combinations are possible. For example



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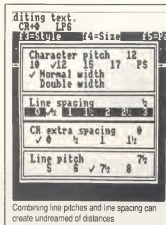
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THE GOOD SOFTWARE FILE

These pages provide a guide to the best software around for the Amstrad PCW. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Spreadsheets, Games and Graphics to face the ultimate test. We've set out to test every piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide which program is

the one you're looking for. The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available. As well as a brief summary of what they do, there are the main Plus and Minus points for each program - Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼.

SPREADSHEETS

If a database replaces an address book, then a spreadsheet replaces the back of an old envelope. It is really an electronic piece of paper which allows you to jot down numbers, juggle them around and analyse the cost benefits of a situation. Vital for businesses, spreadsheets can be useful to home users too: if you want a bank loan you will find that showing your bank manager a spreadsheet printout of your living expenses answers a lot of questions!

A typical spreadsheet has a grid of rows and columns. This grid forms a screenful of cells identified by their column and row numbers, e.g. A3, K36 etc. Each cell can contain a simple number, some text to make the page easier to read, or a formula telling the spreadsheet to work out a number using values from elsewhere. The power of spreadsheets is in this last category, formulae. You can make a cell's value depend on the value of cells above it, or to the left of it, and this value is then automatically updated if changes are made to the other cells.

So how do you choose between the various spreadsheets? One difference is sheet size, i.e. the number of cells you are allowed to work with. You'll need a few hundred for home use, and 1000 or more for business use. Another area is the range of formulae that you can use - all spreadsheets allow simple column and row totalling, but with some you can get complex statistical analyses too. As with all software, think very carefully what you will need before choosing.

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£29.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

Mini Office is a suite of five integrated programs - database, word processor, graphics module, comms package, and a very good spreadsheet. Broadly similar to SuperCalc in operation with usual features of auto or manual recalculation, replicating of rows/columns, powerful range of arithmetic functions etc. Printout is a strong point - rows/columns can be put into italic/bold etc, and prints draft, NLQ or even sideways! Can't sort and can't just save data or structure of a spreadsheet, but maximum size of spreadsheet is claimed to be 320k. You can use the data from a spreadsheet in the graphics module directly. This manual is, however, pretty useless.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Good, full-featured easy to use spreadsheet
- ▲ Prints in draft, NLQ or even sideways
- ▲ Maximum size of spreadsheet 320k
- ▲ Can transfer data directly to graphics module
- ▼ Manual is little more than an index of commands
- ▼ Working out how to transfer data to graphics module requires a lot of inspired guesswork
- ▼ 'Save' options not as versatile as SuperCalc

CRACKER TURBO

£49.95 • Software Tech • 0277 220573

A spreadsheet designed with advanced calculating power firmly in mind, including statistical functions. The screen layout is totally defined by the user, and cell value calculations can almost be programs, e.g. DO...WHILE. It might prove too complex if all you want is simple spreadsheet operations. The screen messages are very helpful though. Turbo is claimed to be faster than Cracker 2 though sometimes isn't noticeably so.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Can cope with very complex formulae
- ▲ Flexible screen format defined by the user

- ▲ On screen prompts are very clear
- ▲ Graphs/charts can be automatically produced
- ▼ Documentation is large, but obscure and confusing
- ▼ You've got to do a lot of work just to get started
- ▼ Very complex for quick, simple applications
- ▼ Needs some programming skills to get the most out of it
- ▼ Free workspace is on the small side (17k) although memory is used efficiently

SCRATCHPAD PLUS

£59.99 • Caxton • 01-251 9494

If you want a traditional spreadsheet, ScratchPad Plus has most of the features you could want and more. Using 'virtual memory' means you can have a huge data area, and the screen can be divided into windows to view different parts at the same time. Many of the commands bear a remarkable similarity to the big business spreadsheet Lotus 1-2-3.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Virtual memory means you can have large spreadsheets
- ▲ Multiple windows - you can see all parts you want at once
- ▲ Good control over formatting
- ▲ Vast range of calculations possible
- ▼ Documentation sorely needs an index
- ▼ Screen prompts are cryptic; you need the manual to hand
- ▼ No provision for automatic execution from files
- ▼ No graphical output facilities

SUPERCALC 2

£49.95 • Amsoft/Sortim • 091 567 3395

The best selling spreadsheet, officially endorsed by Amstrad. SuperCalc 2 is broadly similar to ScratchPad Plus, and at least as effective, but it has a smaller workspace and is less flexible about the allowed spreadsheet dimensions. You can store sequences of commands for repetitive calculations.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent manual - sections for beginners and experts
- ▲ Stores commands to be triggered
- ▲ 'Data Interchanger' allows you to transfer spreadsheet data to other applications
- ▲ Comprehensive range of calculation functions available
- ▲ Screen can be split into 2 windows
- ▼ Spreadsheet is limited by memory size
- ▼ No graphical output facilities

FIRST CALC

£29.95 • Minerva Systems • 0392 37766

Touted as a quick and simple to use program for the beginner, this is nevertheless quite a powerful spreadsheet, with a large capacity, ability to replicate formulae, export etc. Really it's not vastly more user-friendly than the rest but a good value package at the same

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ A lot of program for the money
- ▲ Good tutorials with demo files
- ▲ Simple to use but reasonably sophisticated
- ▼ Not much easier to use than more powerful packages

POCKET CALCSTAR

£39.95 • Davis Rubin Associates • 0386 841181

A fairly traditional spreadsheet but with a few surprising features. It's not particularly large or fast, but is attractively priced and has all the basic functions. Can form part of an integrated system with the other Pocket products. A safe buy for the first-time user, and the documentation is up to the usual high MicroPro standards.

PLUSES • MINUSES

• GRAPHICS

You can use a graphics package to create and store diagrams and drawings on disc, to be amended, adjusted or printed out at will.

There are three main types of graphics package: art, technical drawing and graph plotting programs. In art packages the emphasis is on designs and pictures, with freehand drawing facilities, a selection of pretty text fonts and a variety of patterns to fill areas with. These are made much more effective and easier to use if you have a mouse.

Technical drawing packages concentrate on shapes, such as squares and polygons, lines and labels. Finally graph plotters will take your data and turn them into bar charts, pie charts and so on. 9512 owners will have to buy a dot matrix printer to do all this, of course.

DR DRAW

£49.95 • Digital Research • 0635 35304

This is a drawing utility, which allows you to compose designs from circles, polygons, lines and a wide variety of shading and styles of text. It's very cumbersome to use unless you also have a light pen or a mouse, and overall not very friendly. Not recommended unless you're ready for some hard work.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ When pushed, it can produce very neat diagrams
- ▲ Good, professional manual
- ▼ You need CP/M expertise to get it installed and going
- ▼ Painfully slow screen handling
- ▼ Difficult to use by keyboard alone -- you must buy a lightpen or mouse

DR GRAPH

£49.95 • Digital Research • 0635 35304

A rather specialised package, specifically for presenting complex data in graph form. Can produce line graphs, bar charts, pie charts, scatter plots, text, and compositions of any mixture of these. Very flexible, and easily operated by menus, but really needs a graph plotter to do it justice.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Can read data from certain spreadsheet programs (e.g. SuperCalc)
- ▲ Extensive annotation of your designs and text placing is possible
- ▲ Good, professional manual (although no mention of Amstrad specifics)
- ▼ Supports a colour graph plotter as an output device
- ▼ You need to have some CP/M expertise to get it installed and going
- ▼ There is no way of joining points by a smoothed curve

- ▲ Good range of mathematical calculation functions
- ▲ Good documentation -- sections for beginners and reference
- ▲ You can preset a number of cells to visit, for form filling
- ▲ Can be integrated with other Pocket products, eg ReportStar
- ▼ Screen size is very small -- 10-15 spreadsheet rows,
- ▼ No auto-recalculate facility
- ▼ It's not very fast
- ▼ You can't type heading text etc. over adjacent columns

MULTIPLAN

£69.99 • MicroSoft/NewStar • 0277 220573

A well established package with all the features you would expect of a reasonable spreadsheet -- if it just facts that something extra that recommends some of the newer ones. No support for command reading from files, or for "virtual memory". Adequate, but there are better for the money. And the manual can kill at twenty pages!

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Functions easily entered by menu selection
- ▲ Full range of features and functions
- ▲ On-screen help text is available as you go
- ▲ Sheets can be interlinked and data transferred between them
- ▼ You need a computing degree to understand the manual
- ▼ No support for automatic recalculation
- ▼ Workbooks is limited by CP/M memory space
- ▼ Printer output a bit cumbersome

LIGHTPEN/ MOUSE ART

£79.95 or £129.95 • Electric Studio • 0462 675666

Obviously you are buying a piece of hardware -- a light pen, or a mouse, that can be used with many PCW graphics programs, like DR Draw. In practice, the main use is with the software that comes with it, a very good picture drawing package. You can freehand draw, get airbrush effects, create polygons and circles, and move blocks of pixels. Great fun.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Light pen hardware is a simple plug-in module
- ▲ Can use freehand pen or cursor keys for accuracy
- ▲ Menu selections are easy to understand
- ▲ Full range of functions for area filling, shading and spraying
- ▲ Blocks of pixels can be moved and copied
- ▼ You would need to know your way around CP/M to use the lightpen itself with other graphics programs
- ▼ Items on the screen are purely pixels, not distinct elements
- ▼ No positioning of items by numeric co-ordinates for accuracy.

MASTER PANT

£19.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

A WIMP environment graphics package (windows, icons, menus, and pointer) which will run with Kempston, AMX or Electric Studio mice. Useful facilities for drawing curved or straight lines, polygons, boxes, circles and ellipses, and a host of 'fill' patterns. Undo 'function and eraser facility, plus the ability to zoom in on a part of the picture.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ WIMP environment makes it easy to use
- ▲ Zoom function lets you fine tune your pictures
- ▲ Good range of effects
- ▲ Undo and erase facilities
- ▼ Text fonts are boring
- ▼ Can't move large blocks with the copy function

MASTERSCAN

£69.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

A device which clips on to your printer head and scans pictures, sending the digitised result to disc. You can then use the pictures in desktop publications, or in other graphics packages, such as Master Pant. Very useful for newsletter production but the claims for Master Scan as a low-cost fax machine are grandiose -- a quality of scanned text is poor if the text is at all less than headline size.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple method of getting good digitised graphics
- ▲ Suitable for all desktop publishing programs
- ▲ Central control useful
- ▼ Quality of scanned text is bad -- no good for faxes
- ▼ Problems with illustrations containing lots of grey

POSTAFONT

£9.95 • Independent User Group • 0242 224340

It's easy to ring the changes with the five fonts provided on this poster program because you can have either solid or hollow characters in one of six patterns. Very good value for money but best for the occasional poster producer.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Its really good value for money
- ▲ You can freely mix fonts and styles
- ▼ The print commands are contained in a file which you have to create yourself
- ▼ No warning if the poster is too big for the paper

LIGHTNING BASIC

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823496

A very clever add-on to normal Basic which works on three levels. The first controls all the everyday commands, whilst the second and third levels are used for designing icons, characters and sprites. There is something in it for everyone, whether an experienced Basic programmer or a beginner.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple and easy to use
- ▲ Makes simple Basic programs look really professional
- ▲ Good fun to use
- ▼ Documentation can be unclear
- ▼ Printed output is coarse draft quality
- ▼ Can only cope with simple graphics

COMPLEMENT FONTS & BORDERS

£12.50 • Dragonfly Designs • N/A

Although it can be used with all the main DTP packages, this latest complement disc was designed to work alongside Strip Press. The 11 fonts supplied on the disc show consistent good design and a nice far and are easily loaded.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ The fonts provide a very professional finish
- ▲ It is possible to rotate and reverse elements
- ▼ Very little support for other packages
- ▼ Setting up borders tends to be difficult and time-consuming
- ▼ Printed output could be better (but it's still above average)

SIGNWRITER

£49.95 • Wight Scientific • 01 858 2699

Offers the widest range of features of any of the poster printing programs. Signwriter provides a range of 20 fonts, some of them very imaginative. Ideal for posters.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ You can redesign fonts and design your own symbols
- ▲ A wide range of interesting fonts is supplied
- ▼ Not very user-friendly
- ▼ Font design is slow

STOP PRESS

£29.99 • AMS • 0925 413501

Though touted as a DTP program, Stop Press is an excellent graphics package. Can present data in the form of graphs, pie charts etc., and has the usual range of facilities to draw and fill triangles, boxes and so on plus a very good 'zoom' option which lets you examine the effect of changes in great detail.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good graph drawing facilities
- ▲ Can design your own area fill patterns
- ▲ Good range of clip art, which you can modify if you wish
- ▲ Can superimpose one image on another
- ▲ Works with AMX and Kempston mice
- ▲ Is also a good DTP package
- ▼ Underlying wrongly placed text is difficult

AYE PLUS

£19.95 • CP Software • 099382 3463

The full title is 'All you ever wanted to know about graphics, the universe and everything on PCW 8256/8512', but were afraid to ask! Plus 'Prew'. A wide range of little programs to do graphic things on the PCW like smooth scrolling, defining windows, moving sprites around. The programs are written in assembler, with the source code provided if you want to see how to program them for yourself and adapt the routines.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Wide range of useful functions

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GRAPHICS • GAMES

- ▲ Can be used from BASIC, machine code, or other language
- ▲ The assembler source code is supplied
- ▲ Inexpensive
- ▲ Good manual
- ▲ CP don't mind you using their routines in programs you sell
- ▼ A bit long winded to use from BASIC
- ▼ No easy way of loading just the routines you want

VIDI PCW

£99.95 • Rombo Productions • 0506 39046

A very similar package to the Electric Studio digtiser, not much to choose between the two. Rombo's works with the Fleet Street Editor. Electric Studio is a Newsworld International PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Text can be inserted from within the program
- ▲ 16 levels of shading
- ▲ Can print images to screen in defined order and time apart.
- ▼ Unhelpful manual

VIDEO DIGITISER

£99.95 • Electric Studio • 0462 675666

A black box which plugs onto the expansion port at the back of the PCW, into which you put a video camera or video recorder. It will then 'digitise' the picture & receives and display it on the

screen. The result can be used as a normal graphic in any of the desktop publishing packages and can be edited, cut, etc.

PLUSES • MINUSES

GRAFPAD WITH POWERCAD

£149.50 • Grafsales • 0923 43942

A system allowing both freehand and technical drawing via a special pen. This works from a 'digitising tablet' which takes over the functions of the keyboard and fits into the expansion port at the back of the PCW. Wide range of features including object move, ability to define symbols for future use and sophisticated zoom feature for fine adjustments. Its potential is enormous though at the price may be limited to specialist drawing office applications

PLUSES • MINUSES

strong play and the 3D graphics are excellent

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	5/5
RANGE OF FEATURES	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

COLOSSUS CHESS 4.0

£15.95 • CDS Software (0302 21134) • All PCWs

A very strong chess game which manages to use time which you spend thinking to plan its strategy. Bags of features, including blindfold games

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CYRUS II CHESS

£15.95 • Amsoft (0277 230222) • All PCWs

Chess game with a stunningly detailed 3-D display. The play is quite strong, with several handy features like allowing you to take back a move.

GRAPHICS	5/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

DOUBLE T PATIENCE

£17.95 • Thurston Techniques (0395 274966) • All PCWs

Six well-known card games (from Poker Patience to Paris) to be played either alone or against the computer

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

DRAUGHTS

£15.95 • CP Software (0993 82 3463) • All PCWs

A merciless opponent, this game is capable of very strong play. The playing board is shown in 3D perspective, there is no clock to limit time on moves. You can set level of difficulty

GRAPHICS	4/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	5/5
RANGE OF FEATURES	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

FAIRLIGHT

£14.95 • The Edge (01-831 1801) • All PCWs

Fine 3-D graphic adventure with similar screen display to Batman. You explore a castle prison, battle with numerous enemies and solve puzzles

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

GNOME RANGER

£14.95 • Level 9 (0344 487597) • All PCWs

You follow the adventures of Ingrid Battonow, the intrepid game, through a fairy tale landscape full of compelling puzzles. Humorous and rather quaint.

ATMOSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTION	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

GUILD OF THIEVES

£24.95 • Rainbird (01-240 8838) • 8000s only

To join the select Guild of Thieves in Kerovna, you first have to show your worth by fleeing an island of all its treasures. An excellent adventure!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

HEAD COACH

£15.95 • Coda (01-789 9551) • All PCWs

You coach an American Football team, picking players and deciding tactics against real NFL teams and players. Incredibly detailed simulation - a must for NFL fans!

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

• GAMES •

ACADEMY (TAU CETI II)

£19.95 • CRL (01 533 2918) • 8000s only

The sequel to Tau Ceti. To qualify as an advanced skimmer pilot, you must complete successfully 20 missions. Blast enemy craft with your personally designed skimmer

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

ARMAGEDDON MAN

£19.99 • Martech (0323 768456) • 8000s only

As Supreme Commander and world leader you have to prevent nuclear war from breaking out by preserving good diplomatic relations between the 16 member countries of the UNIN. Nip conflict in the bud by providing sufficient food and resources

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BACKGAMMON

£15.95 • CP Software (099382 3463) • All PCWs

A fairly good implementation of the gambling board-game. Playing speed is easily alterable and is totally unrelated to the games level of skill control.

RANGE OF FEATURES	4/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
GRAPHICS	4/5	DOCUMENTATION	3/5

BATMAN

£14.95 • Ocean (061-832 6633) • 8000s only

3-D animated graphics as you guide Batman around Gotham City, looking for hidden parts of the Batcraft. Good range of hazards, and even a tunnel!

GRAPHICS	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

BLACKSTAR

£14.95 • CRL (01-533 2918) • 8000s only

A traditional text adventure with large playing area. You explore Castle Blackstar in search of a power orb

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	2/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BOUNDER

£13.95 • Gremlin (0742 753423) • 8000s only

A graphics bouncing-ball game. You have to direct the ball over a treacherous network of squares & hexagons. Persevere - or use the cheat mode!

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIAN CLOUGH'S FORTUNES

£17.95 • CDS (0302 21134) • All PCWs

A cross between Monopoly and Football Manager, combining board and PCW. Go for league and cup success - but keep the bank manager happy too!

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIDGE PLAYER 2000

£19.95 • CP Software (099382 3463) • All PCWs

A few of the bids it makes seem a little strange, but as bridge programs on computers go this is pretty good. Claims not to cheat, even though it deals!

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CATCH 23

£19.99 • Martech (0323 768456) • All PCWs

A game of exploration on an inhospitable island which has been taken over by the military. Your task is to locate the 'most secret military complex on earth' and escape with the design of their most deadly weapon.

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

CLOCK CHESS 88

£15.95 • CP Software (0993 823643) • All PCWs

One of the better PCW chess programs. You can alter the level of play by specifying a time limit. Capable of very

THE GOOD SOFTWARE FILE

GAMES

HEAD OVER HEELS

£14.95 • Ocean (061 832 6633) • 8000s only

A superlative, compulsive 3D arcade adventure where you control either Head or Heels. Escape from Castle Blackmoor and free the Empire's enslaved planets.

GRAPHICS	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

HITCH-HIKERS' GUIDE

£24.95 • Comsoft (0890 2854) • All PCs

In many people's minds, the best adventure program ever written. Based on Douglas Adams' series, it is ingenious, hilarious and mind-boggling. A must!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

JINXSTER

£24.95 • Rainbird (01 631 5373) • All PCs

This one's all about saving the civilisation of a place called Aquatania from the wicked Green Wizards. All you have to do is find and reassemble a magic bracelet and redirect its errant powers. A very atmospheric game.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	CHALLENGE	5/5
INTERACTION	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

KNIGHT ORC

£19.95 • Level 9 (01-631 5373) • All PCs

You are an orc in this typical Level 9 adventure by the name of Gadleguts. An addictive game with lots of action, plenty to explore and mind-bending puzzles.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

LANCELOT

£14.95 • Mandarin/Level 9 (0625 878888) All PCs

A game in three parts which recounts the adventures of Lancelot. Manufacturers have vividly created an Arthurian world in which points are awarded for displays of chivalry, valour or benevolence. The game permits a full range of powerful commands.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS

£24.95 • Comsoft (0890 2854) • All PCs

Lascivious, lecherous and lewd – definitely not for feminists! An excellent adventure game, spoofing both sci-fi and Soho With 3D scratch'n'sniff card!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

LORD OF THE RINGS

£19.95 • Melbourne Ho. (01 221 6850) • All PCs

Excellent adaptation of the Tolkien classic. You take the role of Frodo or one of his group, and row through Middle Earth meeting balinogs, orcs, wargs and all.

NEXT MONTH

The guide continues next month with the categories of WORDPROCESSORS, ACCOUNTS/PAYROLL, UTILITY and DTP. The month after that will cover DATABASES, EDUCATION and COMMUNICATIONS software, and the month after that it's back to this month's topics.

Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

LURKING HORROR

£24.95 • Activision (01-431 1101/2992) • All PCs

Something nasty is lurking down in the bowels of the George Edwards Institute of Technology – find it before it finds you! Another great game from Infocom.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

MATCHDAY II

£14.95 • Ocean (061 832 6633) • All PCs

Excellent football simulation game with superb graphics. Tackling and jumping, volleying and heading etc. Play against the computer or against a friend.

GRAPHICS	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

MINDFIGHTER

£24.95 • Abstract Concepts/Activision (01 431 1101) • 8000s only

An adventure game set in post-holocaust Southampton. Hero is a psychic 11 year old boy who can change himself into all different kinds of animals, and who has accidentally projected himself into the future. It's up to him to change the course of events and prevent nuclear war.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	3/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

THE PAWN

£24.95 • Rainbird (01-240 8838) • All PCs

An excellent adventure with dozens of superb screen illustrations, zany characters and a host of baffling puzzles. Will keep you transfixed for hours.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

RETURN TO DOOM

£12.95 • Topologika (0733 244682) • All PCs

Sequel to Countdown to Doom: you're back on the planet Doomwargensia again to track down the ambassador Regina who has been kidnapped by some very unpleasant robots.

Another text-only adventure game.			
ATMOSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTION	2/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

SILICON DREAMS

£19.95 • Rainbird (01-240 8838) • All PCs

A trilogy of intriguing adventure games. You are secret agent Kim Kimberley saving Snowball 9 from almost certain doom! Good sci-fi romance novels.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

SCRABBLE

£19.95 • Virgin Leisure (01-727 8070) • All PCs

Excellent implementation of the famous game. 1 to 4 people can play the computer, which knows a fair few obscure words. Good graphical display. Eight levels of difficulty, and the top level scores well or so regularly, so you have to be on top form!

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available at £1.75 each.

Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant omissions or errors in the File as published, please let us know. We intend to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software.

SORCEROR

£24.95 • Activision (01-431 1101/2992) • All PCs

Enter the world of necromancy and sorcery courtesy of another intriguing and mind-bending adventure game from Infocom. You have to find out the correct spells which will locate your missing master, Belbar.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

STARGLIDER

£24.95 • Rainbird (01-240 8838) • 8000s only

A sophisticated shoot-'em-up with 3D vector graphics and a dose of strategy too. Your task is to save Novena, helped by a complex playing guide.

GRAPHICS	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

STATIONFALL

£24.95 • Activision (01-431 1101/2992) • All PCs

Sequel to Planetfall. You explore a space station with your chum Floyd and the philosophical robot Plato. Usual Infocom standards – a great sci-fi adventure, a mix of 2001 and Star Trek!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER

£14.95 • CDS (0302 21134) • All PCs

Surprisingly realistic simulation of both pool and snooker games – not as easy as it looks either! Four shots, breaks etc. and allows for spin, side, strength of shot. Good value, despite all the balls being greens!

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

£19.95 • Mirrorsoft (01-377 4645) • 8000s only

A combat simulation of a Hawker Harrier, designed in conjunction with British Aerospace. Very detailed and realistic but you'll need to put in a few hours with the manual to get off the ground!

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

TIME AND MAGIK

£14.95 • Mandarin Software (0625 879920) • All PCs

An excellent trilogy of time travel adventure which can be played in any order. Your task is to protect the history of the world from the destructive time Lords – another very atmospheric game.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TETRIS

£19.99 • Mirrorsoft (01-377 4837) • 8000s only

You fit together bricks of various shapes that drop out of the sky at the bottom of the screen. The better the fit, the higher your score. One of those ridiculously simple ideas which is very addictive!

GRAPHICS	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TOMAHAWK

£19.95 • Digital Int. (0276 684959) • All PCs

A sophisticated Apache helicopter flight simulator. Impressive cockpit view graphics as you engage in combat missions – can be used with a joystick too.

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

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SECONDHAND AMSTRAD 8512 FOR SALE with dust covers manuals and plenty of spare discs etc. £300 o.n.o. Tel: 05806 4474 Eric Meare, 26 Beacon Oak Road, Tettersden, Kent TN30 6RY

This section of the magazine offers you the chance to speak directly to the huge waiting world of PCW owners. You can place an ad of up to 30 words for just £7.50. So you could use it to sell a computer or launch a user group or

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SPECIAL

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We have limited quantities of the back issues listed below. The prices include a nominal 25p postage. All issues contain excellent TipOff sections and a selection of BASIC listings, plus the other regulars. Don't miss the chance to expand your collection!

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THE 8000 PLUS SPECIAL OFFERS SECTION

Welcome to the new-style 8000 Plus Special Offers section. As ever, our intention is to bring you the best selected products in the marketplace - products that, for various reasons are often hard to obtain in the shops. Rest assured, however, that to qualify for the Special Offers section the product has to have been successfully reviewed in the magazine. In some cases, such as DTP and LocoScript books, we have chosen from a plethora of titles the one which we believe offers the best features and represents the best value for money.

Scan these pages at your leisure. Not only are many of the items hard to obtain, but we usually manage to offer you them at less than the full recommended retail price and we carry stocks. If you call (0458) 740111 or fill in the Order Form on the left hand page, you'll usually get your goods within three working days of ordering (although some items - highlighter pens! - do run out of stock and can be hard to obtain, so please allow 28 days for delivery in such cases).

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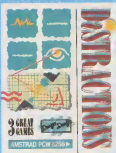
9512 software:
The following titles do not run on the 9512:
Distractions;
Academy

DISTRACTIONS

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Wow! Three games on this compilation disk, which makes each one cost £3.30 each. It's not just value for money though, because the games themselves were written by Design Design and feature three great program ideas. NEXOR is a superior 3D isometric graphics strategy game, 2112 AD an ion-driven arcade adventure and On The Run is a super-fast all-action maze game.

Altogether you're getting three intelligently-written graphic arcade games with a strong strategy element ensuring that they remain playable and interesting for more than the time it takes to master the initial 'shoot to kill' element. Which is why it's called Distractions!
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CATCH 23

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'A good deal of thought and planning has gone into this game and it shows', was what our reviewer said of this 3D wire graphic arcade strategy game in issue 25 of 8000 Plus. The aim is to enter a military complex and get out with a laser system blueprint. There are 14 sectors, and the vector graphics - a la Starglider - involve you in the best PCW romp for many a long winters night. Order Code 8043



TOMAHAWK

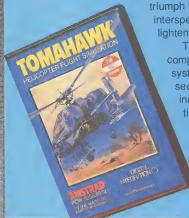
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'A good deal of thought and planning has gone into this game and it shows', was what our reviewer said of this 3D wire graphic arcade strategy game in issue 25 of 8000 Plus. Martech's first PCW game is something of a

PICK OF THE MONTH!

triumph for intelligent gameplay interspersed with furious action requiring lightning-fast reactions at key points.

The basic aim is to enter a military complex and get out with a laser system blueprint. You have 14 sectors to explore, and weapons include detonators, bombs and timers. The vector graphics - a la Starglider - involve you in a thoughtful game which offers the best new PCW entertainment for many a long winters night.
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'A brilliant sequel to the ground-breaking space exploration game Tau Ceti. In Academy you must complete 20 missions, grouped in five levels of four; combat skills and environmental understanding mean must both be completed to succeed. Graphics and control factors have been heightened to push computer gaming to a completely fresh level. You won't be disappointed!
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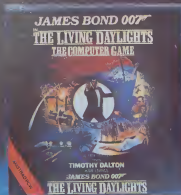
LIVING DAYLIGHTS

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'A demanding game with plenty of action' was the verdict on the officially licenced computer game of the James Bond film starring Timothy Dalton.

The game, based on the film and the coin-op arcade game by Arcadia, features eight levels, each in a different location, in which your responses must be lightning-quick in order to survive. Gameplay involves standard shoot-'em-up, left/right/up/down fire, with weapons including bazookas, grenades, missile-firing pens, crossbows and a ghetto blaster!

A game for those that like their games in the 'just one more go' adrenalin rush category!
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LOCOFILE

£29.95 plus Locoscript II wall chart and highlighter pens

It's difficult to think of any LocoScripters who wouldn't find LocoFile useful, was Rob Ainsley's conclusion when he previewed Locomotive's new database in issue 26 of 8000 Plus.

The fact is, a database which can be accessed from inside LocoScript II and is fully compatible with LocoMail is a brilliantly logical idea. Locomotive's usual panache comes to the fore in the feel of the program too. Essentially an easy to use card index, LocoFile features flexible indexing, fast lookup, efficient use of disc space and is suitable for any PCW (plus three hard disc drives).

Features include:

- Look up or change card details from within LocoScript
- CUT and PASTE to and from LocoScript
- Use up to eight indexes at once - alphabetic or numeric
- Cards up to 99 lines by 80 columns wide
- Up to 50 items per card
- Holds 1,000 names and addresses on a 706K disc
- No limit to number of entries on hard disc
- Add or delete fields, change card size at any stage
- Fully two-way compatible with Loco Mail

For all LocoScript 2 users who want an expandable suite of applications, Locomotive is providing the answer without ever having to boot up CP/M! LocoFile provides the classic easy-to-use environment familiar to LocoScript users and has all the hallmarks of a major software launch. Signs of relief all round!

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LocoScript and mstrad PCW Comp



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"What mighty contests rise from trivial things."
ALEXANDER POPE

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£11.95 - Locomotive Software

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Copy of LocoScript II wallchart included with this book

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So you could say the 8000 Plus Software Collection offers rather a lot of value for your money.

If you would like to order the program with a subscription, quote Order Code 81100. If you just want the program on its own (at a price of £7.95) then quote Order Code 81101.

SPECIAL OFFERS **8000 PLUS**

STOP PRESS

Only £74.99 (RRP £89.99)

There are sensible fonts
AND THERE ARE EXOTIC FONTS
Kind of course the statutory Old English font
So whatever you want you will find
One to suit -
And if it doesn't quite fit you'll put it
Or else **Stretch it to fit**

▲ 'Just some of the fonts available on AMS Stop Press'

Desktop publishing – doing page makeup on your computer instead of the old cut-and-paste method – is the boom area of home computing. All the national dailies are switching over to DTP methods – and so are thousands of PCW owners, to produce newsletters and flyers.

Want to try your hand? The best developed DTP package for the Amstrad PCW range is now available from Future Publishing at an all-in price of £74.99. Stop Press's incredibly versatile and powerful software plus mouse will turn your PCW into a DTP machine.

The Swiss-made mouse is probably the best currently available and offers high resolution movement all over the screen. The software makes the best possible use of this sensitivity, featuring as it does a wide range of DTP facilities which would probably cost three times as much on higher-priced computers.

Just a few of the features are: -

- 14 different fonts supplied
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- 9512 compatible using an Epson compatible dot matrix printer

Altogether, this is a superb way of getting to grips with DTP. We don't expect to offer any other DTP package through these pages again, because we've held back until we were absolutely sure that this was the best deal. So here's your chance to get going.

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Age of Reason

Your dismissal of GK Armstrong's plea for the hard perspex cases for individual CF-2 discs, reeks of juvenile arrogance. The "What is good for me must also be fine for everyone else" syndrome of the over-confident 'kiddywink' whether they're underkill, overkill or even superkill: I WANT INDIVIDUAL HARD PERSPEX CASES for my CF-2 discs. I work, as probably do many PCW owners in a small, dust producing dwelling with very limited provision of working surface area. And my inquisitive and meddling AGP clambers all over the place; and I wouldn't limit his charm-producing freedom for all the CF-2s in 'Technidom'. I find it much more convenient and better for my very limited number of private-user CF-2s to have the 3 or 4 discs in use, alongside my PCW in those small, individual cases. I much prefer to have those two drive surfaces and the edge aperture on the naked CF-2s, dust and finger-smear protected. So get off your Rocking Horse, Junior and do something to provide for older and wiser PCW owners with those cases. Throw your PCW through the window and buy one with legs. You could probably order one with special in-between 'trim'. Then send me about 25 of your spare cases, if you can't persuade the manufacturer to make and market them again.

K Bright
Harrow

8000 PLUS bilbbgh splgh bib gagaga disc cases ghoo ghoo ghobghgh still not necessary phrphright mammmam dadadad silly old phrlgh gurgle bib

Discussion

I must respond to Mr Fisher's response on Mr G K Armstrong's letter about disc cases in issue 27.

I feel that Mr Fisher has missed the point completely. Most users know that 3" disks are more robust than their counterparts. The point is that the packaging has changed to save Amstrad money (did we see a decrease in cost - not!) and cause many users inconvenience. If you were to use the excellent disc labelling listing published in issue 11 of 8000 Plus then you would know how useful the library cases were. Not only could one see at a glance what was on each disc, one could keep the disc cases and labels much cleaner. Believe it or not, some people like to keep their possessions as new as possible.

Mr Fisher should not presume what the consumer should put up

with unless he has carried out an extensive survey of consumers' preferences. All the dealers I phoned (that is all the ones listed in your magazine) agreed that many customers were not pleased with the new style packaging. In fact, I ordered 100 blank disc cases from Kador, which I sent back due to their second hand appearance.

Mr Young at Kador regretted this, but found that damaged cases were all that his suppliers would or could send him. He agreed that there is a market for these cases. Someone please import them from Japan!

On the whole, Mr Fisher normally talks sense and I have found Locomotive to be an extremely helpful software company. It is a shame that they do not manufacture hardware, then none of us would have to hear the Amstrad battle cry 'NO COMMENT'.

So, on the whole, Locomotive and 8000 Plus have contributed a great deal to the PCW user and to Mr Sugar's bank account, but please listen to all your followers, even though their preferences do not fall in with yours.

Incidentally Mr Armstrong's request for suppliers of the disc cases was not met.

B Lear
Melbourn

X ray eyes

Your article about LocoFile and a small reference to the damage that can be done to data discs by

electromagnetic radiation prompts me to pass on my observations which might help to allay people's worries.

In my work I use a small X ray machine many times a day. I have owned a PCW for 4 years now (since the Autumn of their release) and it sits switched on all day and every day right next to my X ray machine.

I have not had a single case of corrupted data during that time; indeed, when I first discovered that X rays might damage a disc, I placed one at the end of the tube,



"SO THAT'S WHERE THE MISSING ADDRESS MARK IS"

POSTSCRIPT

A quagmire of quibbles, questions and quips quoted by a quixotic Ed.

Yes, it's Q this month, and you can join one - of the PCW owners who write to PostScript. Thought- and sleep-provoking letters on all topics related and unrelated to the PCW. This month sees the return of the Disc Case Debate, Wobbly Screens, Photo filing and another bunch of international correspondence. Send your letters to PostScript, 4 Queens St, Bath, BA1 1ED.

in the line of fire, and discharged it. Not only was there no corruption but the disc still operates today, some two years later, with the same LocoScript software that writes this letter.

G Headley
London

8000 PLUS But the burning question is, was this with the disc cases on or off??

More discussion

Amstrad and I are indulging in some correspondence. At least we were until my last letter. They are truculent - I am bitter. I like the plastic covers on their CF2 discs. They have cut them out to save costs. I accuse them of profiteering and ignoring customer needs. They say my argument has no sound ground. Wildings, my supplier, says that other customers are upset.

I cannot agree that the new thin cardboard cover is protective enough for hard wear and tear. Amstrad say it is.

What do other readers think? If they disagree, would they too write to Amstrad?
Dudley Littleton
London

8000 PLUS OK OK. I give in! Sorry if my reply was misinterpreted - it was meant to be a reassurance to Mr A that cases aren't necessary, so that he needn't worry. We've dug up a few addresses of disc case suppliers on page 3 for you. And please everyone, don't blame us or Locomotive for Amstrad's decisions!

POSTSCRIPT

Lovely Finnish

The new version of Fleet Street Editor is a decided improvement on the old, but there are still numerous bugs left in it from before. (A list of ten of them is attached).

However there are pluses to FSE. I have bought Stop Press and would agree that the graphics aspect is splendid. It is ideally suited to producing things like posters and such, but I would hate to have to use it to produce something with a lot of text. You almost always seem to need to lengthen, shorten or otherwise alter the text once you see it on the page. With FSE this was possible with the old version and is quite easy in the new. This letter has been quite heavily edited on the page. The ability to use A5 paper is something else

that FSE has and Stop Press lacks.

As your correspondent Herra Airola would tell you, he needs something which FSE has and Stop Press at least, does not—the capability of producing the letters ä and ö in all typefaces.

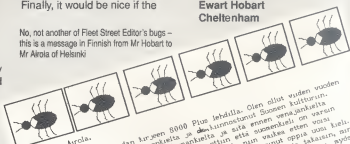
In other words, Mirrorsoft potentially have a very good, very useful program, if only they would make the effort to do a thorough job of debugging. If I, as a mere user, with limited time, can manage to identify so many bugs in a day or two, why cannot the professionals do the same and better. Why, indeed, was the program let out in the state that it was an then let out again as it is now? The must also accept the need to talk to users. If they had just "Yes, we know there are bugs and are working on it" they would

have been spared my letter in your magazine and the consequent strengthening of the warning in your software listing. Finally, it would be nice if the

No, not another of Fleet Street Editor's bugs – this is a message in Finnish from Mr Hobart to Mr Aikola of Helsinki

"good fairy" could go international and also send Herra Airola a present to improve Anglo-Finnish relations a little.

Ewart Hobart
Cheltenham



Huva Berra Asola.

[illegible]

Green piece

May I congratulate you on your editorial last month. The value of each individual's contribution to matters Green (if you will forgive the jargon) cannot be over-emphasised. Several thousand people doing a small thing makes it a big one, and if ordinary, relatively sensible people like you, me and your readers won't do anything then why should the Government bother? All forms of paper – magazines, newspapers, junk mail, cardboard etc can be taken to wastepaper dealers. For small organisations this can turn into a useful if labour intensive fund raiser. Computer paper in particular fetches a very good price,

In my own (admittedly still paper based) office, a plastic bag for this purpose has long replaced the wastepaper basket; junk mail is searched for letters with blank backs that can be used for notes, memos, file copies of original letters etc, and the file copies of reply letters are printed on the backs of the original enquiry letter; this not only saves paper, it saves considerable filing space. None of this is trivial. It's vital.

Roger Taylor
Wirral

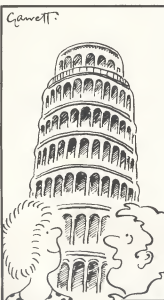
8000 PLUS Hear hear. All waste paper at Future goes into a bin for the Friends of Earth to recycle – one small way of atoning for the vast quantities of paper we consume.

Recycled fanfold continuous paper is available from Traidcraft plc, Kingsway, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE11 0NE. (We'd be glad to hear of any other suppliers).

Spies in the City tell me of a curious virus that has appeared on PCs. When you try to print anything, a message flashes on the screen saying 'Think of the trees! Continue (y/n)?'. The longer the document, the more times you have to press Y to continue the printing.

Straight faces

I was interested to read John Nash's skewed display in December's PostScript as my husband's computer "displayed" the same symptoms (we are a two PCW household). By applying the first principle of technology "twiddle all the knobs before attempting major surgery" the screen straightened up after manipulation



"WHY DON'T THEY JUST USE THE HORIZONTAL HOLD CONTROL"

of the Horizontal Hold button at the lower rear of the machine. This knob is actually inside the casing but there is a small hole through which a fine screwdriver can be poked, failing that it can be got at by removing the casing. I can't guarantee that this will solve John Nash's problem but it may be of use to other readers.

Kate Daniel
Portsmouth

New zeal land

Oh cripes, I've upset VA Hartland (PostScript last month). I'm sorry, though on re-reading my previous letter, I feel s/he's making a bit more of it than there really is. Still, it is quite true that there are other suppliers of PD software for the PCW, and if I inferred otherwise then I apologise.

Personally, I like the public domain precisely because it offers challenges – as well as outstanding value, and often friendships. I wouldn't buy it up-and-running from someone like me – or V A Hartland. The fun would be gone. Others though want to use it straightaway, and why not? for those users, bulletin boards are not so useful, hence the need for specialist – and usually small - machine-specific libraries.

Many PD programs are as good as their commercial counterparts; indeed very many have no commercial equivalent. And by the way, Victoria Marsden, you can really get a program for £4 or £5 – you might even get twenty or so. Try it, get a list from me or V A Hartland, and the other suppliers as well – or try a user group like

PCW file and get it for nothing.
Mick Reed
Angmering

PEEKing

On my 9512, MERging my dummy file with a protected BASIC file does not release the protection. Your PCW-IQ article in the December issue suggested this may be the case, but do you know how to overcome the problem?

"Desert Island Tipoff" on page 71 of issue 16 gives a PEEK address of 65404 as that of the seconds counter for use in the RANDOMIZE command. Why doesn't this work on the 9512?

In predictive mode, LocoSpell gave my new bank manager's name as "Walkover". Time to order the laser printer perhaps?

Arthur Wardell
Halifax

8000 PLUS It seems that the ability to unprotect a protected BASIC file was a bug in the 8000 version of Mallard which has been fixed on the 9512, so no way I'm afraid. The PEEK address was misprinted – it should be PEEK 94504 – and works OK on a 9512

More discussions still

I was pleased to note that you are still exploding the myth surrounding CF2-DD discs (PostScript last month) and explaining that CF-2 discs can be used as CF2-DDs, but disconcerted to discover companies still advertising 'double-density' discs within your covers: KAVIN for instance, who offer 5 such discs for a mere £16.05 more than the same amount of CF2's. Is

High definition

Being off sick and unable to use my 9512, I have been reading back copies of PCW magazines. Although computer-illiterate and very Loco in my Script I am very interested in words. Much of what appears in the magazines is incomprehensible to me as a very simple word-processing creature.

buffer
chips
continuous stationery
cursor
Daisy Wheel
data file
data base
DTPs
digitise
Dot Matrix
floppy disc
high level language
mainframe
mouse pad
panasonic
olivetti
qume
sharp laptop

ancient computer illiterate
objects on other people's shoulders
through-the-letterbox advertising
operator who has just experienced a crash
1920's US film star
back of an envelope
back of several envelopes
condition common to alcoholics and PCW operators
deliver a Harvey Smith
1920's Mexican film star
unsuccessful pop song
computer manager's reaction to a crash
system where all High St suppliers charge same
skirting board
wall-to-wall noise
small inserts for martinis
first name of Rhonda
(too frightening to define)

John Green
Chatham

this an example of 'double density standards'?

Actually, this letter is just an excuse to ask if you ever considered running regular short stories in 8000 Plus? Well, at least I can do alteration.

Buzz Rodwell
Ipswich

8000 PLUS In response to our request for what people thought about having short stories in 8000 Plus - ie, whether they wanted to see them or not - we had an overwhelming response of one for, one against, and about fifty short stories submitted on the off chance. For the time being the idea has been shelved, sorry!

Specified

My children now want to use the word-processing for GCSE projects but I do not give them free access to my PCW. Instead I have set up their ZX Spectrum + (48K) so that they can type in their work and transfer it later to the PCW for embellishing, final editing and printing. At the Spectrum end we have interface 1 and the Tasword Two word-processing program and naturally we have the serial interface at the PCW.

I had great difficulty establishing the correct connections for the lead between the two. In fact they are fairly simple - pins 2,3,4,5 and 7 at the Spectrum end connect to their counterparts at the PCW end. At the PCW end pin 5 is cross connected to pins 6 and 8. The

However, I have amused myself by giving new definitions to some words and phrases found in your pages and wondered whether you might like to share them. I am sure that other readers can do far better in giving things a new twist.

shop from which I bought my lead got it completely wrong.

The following routine (or something better) has to be inserted into the BASIC of Tasword and must be called when you want to transmit the Tasword text out of the RS232 port. Use the option to enter BASIC which comes up on the STOP menu. Type in the routine and then issue GOTO 9000. When you are happy that it works save Tasword in the usual way.

```
9000 LET Z=0:FORWAT
"Z":300:OPEN#5;"Z": FOR
F=32000+1:
LET Z=Z+1: PRINT #5; CHR$
(PEEK F);: GOSUB 9050: NEXT
F: CLOSE #5:RUN
9050 IF Z=64 THEN PRINT #5;
CHR$ (13);: LET Z=0: RETURN
9100 RETURN
```

Double standards

It seems surprising that the huge character set of LocoScript 2 does not include anything (apart from a row of - which isn't too good) that can be used for double underlining. Dave Sinclair Glasgow

```
(HL)Mstrad in disc case row (HL)(L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
(L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
Mstrad in disc case row (L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
(L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
Mstrad in disc case row (L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
(L1space)Mstrad in disc case row
```

At the PCW end the incoming text can be sent to a file by either PIP, MAIL232 or 8256UKM7. Of course you must set up the Baud rate either from within the Comms programs or with SETSIO. To match the routine above it should be at 300. The default settings for parity, stop bits and bits will match those on the Spectrum.

If you are using PIP the only way of terminating the copying process is to take the 'Q'string Z' option and to place "string" at the end of your text file. EG to copy a file from the Spectrum to M:FRED put the string &&& at the end of your Tasword file and issue PIP M:FRED-AUX:[Q&&&Z] on the PCW. What arrives on the Amstrad is an ASCII file which can then be read into any word processor including LocoScript in the usual way.

You do not actually need Tasword to use the Spectrum as a means of typing in text. It is quite straight forward to write a program which saves typing in text. It is quite straight forward to write a program which saves typing to tape or microdrive cartridge for subsequent transmission to the PCW. But it is not as easy to correct errors as you type.

Dr Clive Roberts
Bristol

Printer repair

My daisywheel printer hammer stuck and it's being repaired under warranty: then the faithful original (October 1985) dot matrix printer heated up and began to melt its case at the back... I was going to be stuck! In any case it needed the pins treated, a job I had been putting off.

So, off with the cover; the smell of melting plastic came from the back of the printer case just to the right of the power input cable. Closer inspection revealed a hot resistor which had apparently

"bubbled" its covering. However, I also noticed that the inlet cable was twisted, and the small white plug/socket's latch was not quite right. Untwisting the cable and setting the plug right removed the overheating. I am glad I did not send it off for repair without investigating! It may yet repeat, of course, but all is cool as I write.

To do the print head I turned to the two back numbers where you mention repairing it yourself.

Unfortunately when you printed the first one - the second is a copy - you forgot to say just HOW you get the printhead out of the carriage! After some hours and dismantling of the carriage bars, the print head slipped off the carriage! I now know how SIMPLE it is and it may help others to know that all you do is:

1. Prise up the bright metal clip behind the printhead, which appears only to hold down the copper input ribbon (but actually holds the printhead forward as well).
2. Ease the printhead backwards towards you and lift it out to clean/dismantle as per article.

When taking the printhead apart, beware pins which fly out under pressure of their return springs - and disappear by attaching themselves to the magnet in it! (it saves a lot of grovelling on the floor). Christopher Leffer Ipswich

Printer problems

Your readers should be warned: disassembling the PCW printer head to clean it is more difficult than the tip-off you printed in February 1988 and again in October would suggest. According to Ika Dawson, the whole procedure takes half an hour. It took me six hours, and a great deal of hair torn out at the roots. Taking the head apart was no problem, but getting the pins back again...

I was presumptuous enough to get Mr Dawson's phone number from Directory Enquiries and ring him about it, and he was very helpful, but I still feel that one of you underestimates the difficulty of the task for the average reader. I had no trouble in doing a DIY memory upgrade or B: drive installation my PCW, but at least the instructions for those tasks were complete!

Please emphasise to your readers that the nine pins all have different shaped tails, although this isn't obvious until after you've removed them. Drawing a circular diagram with the pin tail positions on it is essential, but so is keeping the pins in exactly

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Save and Print
Abandon Edit

The wag in the tail: a new regular page starting this month. Sorry.

Hypocritic oath?

Do you ever get suspicious of those adverts which show famous people drinking coffee, and bet that they don't actually drink that brand at home? Do you further suspect that the 8000 Plus team, while telling everyone how to use their PCWs, do not in fact use PCWs themselves?

Don't worry. Not only is 8000 Plus written entirely on 8512s and 9512s (using Prottext), but at home Steve Patient uses an expanded 8256, as well as a CPC 464 and a Bondwell 14 portable; Sharon Bradley has an 8512; Rob Ainsley has an 8512 and a Z88.

Not only that, but Art Editor Kim Bale has a 9512 and ad person Elaine Brooks is buying an 8256. Also the advertising department have bought an 8256 for their mailshots. But none of us drink Nescafé. (Or was it Maxwell House – or Red Mountain? Memo: sack the ad agency.)

Vive la différence

Walk into any newsagents and you'll see 8000 Plus, along with the other computer magazines, on the row underneath the soft porn. The worrying thing is that all the leering, unshaven, unsavoury-looking individuals in grubby raincoats there are leering at the computer mags.

Soft porn and computing? A souvenir given to us from the Paris Amstrad show was *L'Echo du PCW*, a French Amstrad magazine. For 33F (about £3) you get 64 *PAGES D'ENFER*. Eh? 64 pages of Hell?

8000 Plus, we note smugly, has 92 pages or so for half the price. And though we occasionally make mistakes ourselves, we would never mis-spell the word 'Amstrad' on our front cover.

However, *L'Echo* has a certain Gallic dash about it which we stand Britons can never hope to emulate. In among articles like *Le Duel: Mallard BASIC contre CBASIC* and *Le Choix d'un Language* is the intriguingly titled *Gagnez votre digitaliseur avec Strip Puzzle*. The program, *Strip Puzzle*, is reviewed warmly, receiving comments such as 'plaisir garanti' and 'puzzles sexy très réaliste... plus quelques surprises'.

Before all you feminists paste together standard letters of abuse to us, we think it's tacky too and we're not going to review it in 8000 Plus. And to everyone else, no we haven't got a copy, no we're not going to tell you where you can get one, and no, we're not thinking of adding any new sections to the Good Software Guide. C'est la vie. ■



* 9512 sauf come d'écran



Useless fax

This fax arrived at one of our sister magazines extolling the virtues of faxing by electronic mail, which as we all know, is fast, cheap and perfectly reliable, har har. Do not adjust your set and remember: this is progress. This is the age of technology. This is the shape of things to come.

2025 RELEASE

ENTER EASY FAX
1-800-4-A-LOOK

Courtesy of [illegible]

The problem with Valifax, which Telecom Gold prides itself on communicating with a home or business computer to communicate, was that it had been sent to invalid numbers.

This resulted in a flood of complaints to MicroLink's systems manager, Jim Clarkson.

"They certainly had a point", says the
"even I found it difficult to use."

"people were being asked to send
fax messages
... the front end and now all they have to do is
... they want to send it to"

"But we've re-... telephone number of the people...
at the same time, MicroLink has introduced Tax-Check... whether messages queued for transmission have or
... mail for faxing is to have it

"The whole principle behind using electronic mail is to use as much as possible", says Derek Peakin, head of mobile

"We feel that with Easy Fax and GATEWAY, we've managed to get it right for our customers."

PLEASE NOTE that both EASY FAX and FAX CHECK ...

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